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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Including

ANECDOTES OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTERS WHO APPEARED IN FRANCE DURING THE LAST CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH;

with

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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A.f

By the

AUTHOR OF THE SWISS EMIGRANTS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

BOOK V.

The first thing I did, after arriving at Versailles, and seeing M. de Marigny, was to go and thank Madame de Pompadour. She expressed pleasure at seeing me well settled; and added, with a look of kindness, 'Men of letters have their heads full of certain ideas of equality, which make them sometimes inattentive to the forms of society. I hope, Marmontel, that in your intercourse with my brother, you will never lose sight of them.' I assured her that my sentiments and my duty were here in perfect unison.

I had become acquainted with M. de Marigny in the society of the *Menus Plaisirs*, and had learned through them the kind of man to whom his sister had exhorted me to be so attentive. My own good intentions I was quite sure of; gratitude alone would have prompted me to all the respect which our relative situations called for. But besides good intention, the strictest care was requisite to humour an uneasy and jealous self-love, which rendered him, in the highest degree, susceptible of mistrust and suspicion. His weakness lay in dreading lest men should not esteem him sufficiently, and, out of envious malignity, should say what might be said, of his birth and fortune; and this uneasiness rose to such a height, that he fell into a passion if any one in his presence whispered a few words to another. With the view of sounding the opinion which was entertained of him, he used often to talk of himself with a pretended humility, in order to see if men would take pleasure in hearing

him undervalued; and then, if the least smile or equivocal expression escaped them, the wound it made was deep and incurable. He had all the essential qualities of a virtuous man, and even some agreeable qualities; such as a good and well cultivated understanding, a correct taste in the arts, which he had studied, having taken a journey into Italy for that express purpose; and his whole behaviour was so frank and upright, that he might have been as interesting as he was respectable. But all was spoiled by this peculiarity of his temper, and by the rudeness and bluntness of manner in which he often indulged.

You must perceive, my children, how watchful it was necessary to be, in order to keep always on friendly terms with a man of this character. But I knew him; and made this knowledge the rule of my conduct. Besides, whether with, or without, design, he pointed out to me, by his own example, the footing on which he wished me to converse with him. When

we were by ourselves, he assumed an easy, gay, and friendly air, such as he used to have in the society where we formerly met. When there were others present, and, above all, when these were artists, he talked with esteem, and with an air of affability; but through his politeness you could distinguish the gravity of the superior, and the man in power. I regulated myself by this example. I made a distinction between myself as secretary of buildings, and as a man of letters, and of the world. In public, I set an example, to the two academies of which he was head, and to all the artists employed under his orders, of the respect which we owed to his official situation. At his audiences, no one, either in behaviour or words, could be more sedate and respectful. When we were by ourselves, or in the society of our common friends, I resumed the easy air which was natural to me, yet without ever becoming familiar. As raillery could never be carried on between us on an equal footing, I gently

declined it. He had a certain turn for ridicule, not always very delicate, nor in very good taste; with which, however, he was fond of diverting himself; but it was not safe to play with him at that game. Never was there a man so fond of raillery, yet so unable to bear it himself. A repartee, which would only have slightly touched another, wounded him. I therefore saw the necessity of keeping within the bounds of a moderate gaiety, and never exceeding it. He, on his side, saw a kind of delicacy in my reserve, and always chose to hold a language corresponding to mine. In what regarded himself, indeed, he sometimes shewed a desire to scrutinize my thoughts. For instance, when I went to congratulate him on the rank which he had obtained in the order *du Saint Esprit*, 'M. Marmontel,' said he, 'the king wipes off the meanness of my birth.' I answered what I thought, that his nobility was in his soul, which was fully equal to that of blood. On another occasion, at his re-

turn from the play, he told me of his having found himself in an aukward situation. As he sat on the balcony, and thought only of laughing at the little piece that was acting, he suddenly heard one of the performers, in the character of a drunken soldier, say, 'What! shall I have a handsome sister, and make nothing of her, when so many others raise a fortune by their third cousins.'—'Only imagine,' said he, 'my embarrassment and confusion. The pit luckily did not observe me.'—'Sir,' replied I, 'you had nothing to fear; you justify so completely what is done in your favour, that no one thinks of disapproving it.' And indeed I saw him fill his place in so worthy a manner, that favour towards him seemed no more than justice.

Thus it was that I spent five years under his orders, without the slightest dissatisfaction either on his side or mine; and after I left the place he had given me, he still continued my friend. I had even the good fortune, without his know-

ledge, of being more than once useful to him with his sister, who reproached him with giving harsh refusals to the demands that were addressed to him. 'Madame,' said I, 'I myself have taken down these answers, and I shewed them to her. But,' added I, 'with these sort of people, however politely a refusal be made, it is always bitter.'—'Well,' said she; 'and why so many refusals? have I not enemies enough, without his raising me more.'—'Madame,' replied I at last, 'this is an inconvenience attached to his office; but it is also a duty; there is no medium; he must either become unworthy, by betraying the interests of the king out of complaisance to his courtiers, or must refuse the unreasonable demands which are made from every quarter.'—'How did other people do?' urged this foolish woman.—'Other people did ill, if they did otherwise; but observe, Madam, that less was required of them: for abuses increase as they go on, so that perhaps a more timid compliance is now expected.

But I, who know his principles, dare assure you, that he would sooner leave his place, than yield a point of duty.'—'You are an honest fellow,' said she; 'and I thank you for having defended him so well.'

I never in my life spent a pleasanter time than these five years at Versailles; for Versailles was to me divided into two regions. One was that of intrigue, of ambition, of envy, and of all the passions generated by servile interest, and needy extravagance; there I went seldom or never. The other, in which I passed my life, was the abode of silent and peaceful labour; and after labour was over, of gaiety in the bosom of repose. Free from anxiety, almost wholly my own master, and with only two days of the week to spend in the easy duties of my place, I had chalked out for myself an employment equally agreeable and interesting. This was a regular course of study, in which, with the pen in my hand, I surveyed the different branches of an-

cient and modern literature, and compared them impartially with each other. I became, as it were, an independent man, belonging to no country, and to no age. In this spirit, I selected from my reading the passages which struck me, and the reflections which facts suggested. A mass of materials was thus formed, which were first employed in the articles I wrote for the Encyclopædia, which afterwards furnished the materials of my French Art of Poetry, and which have since been collected together in my Elements of Literature. In this employment there was no restraint, no anxiety as to the opinion of the vulgar. I studied for myself; I expressed my thoughts and sentiments with perfect freedom; and this course of reading and meditation derived a particular interest from the discoveries which I thought myself able to make, of relations between the theory and practice of the art of composition, between its processes and those of nature; relations which seemed likely to be of use in fix-

ing the rules of taste. I had few books of my own; but the royal library supplied them in abundance. When the court took a journey, I made a large provision, as I then followed M. de Marigny; and the woods of Marly, the forests of Compiegne and Fontainebleau, were the closets in which I studied. I had not the same pleasure at Versailles; there, the only inconvenience I experienced was the want of walks. Who would believe it? in the finest days of summer, these magnificent gardens could not be entered. When the hot weather, in particular, came on, these pieces of water, the fine canal, the basons of marble where the bronze seemed to breathe, spread far and wide pestilential vapours; so that the waters of Marly were brought at great expence to lie in this valley, only that they might poison the air which we breathed. I was obliged to go to the woods of Verrieres or Sataury, in search of pure air and wholesome shade.

There was a difference, however, in my manner of spending my time during these excursions. At Marly, at Compiegne, I lived solitary and temperate. At Compiegne, I at one time, for mere pleasure, being in perfect health, lived six weeks on a milk diet. Never was my soul more calm or more peaceful, than during this regimen. My studious days flowed on with unalterable uniformity; my nights were spent in the sweetest slumber; I waked in the morning, and swallowed a large bowl of milk, warm from my black cow, and then shut my eyes again to sleep another hour. Discord might have subverted the world, without ever troubling me. At Marly, I had only one amusement, which was the curious spectacle of the royal card-table, in the drawing-room. There, round a table of lansquenet, I saw men tormented with passions, which respect forbade them to shew. The eager thirst of gold, hope, fear, the grief of losing, the ardent desire of gaining, joy after gaining a card, despair after losing one,

rapidly followed each other in the mind of the players, under the immoveable mask of frigid tranquillity.

At Fontainbleau, my life was less solitary and less sedate. The suppers *des Menus Plaisirs*, the royal huntings, public places, drew me into frequent dissipation, which I had not strength of mind to avoid.

At Versailles, too, I had my amusements; but they were regulated according to my plan of study and employment, so as never to be any thing more than recreations. My daily society was that of the first clerks, almost all agreeable men, vying with each other who should give the best entertainments. In their intervals of leisure, they enjoyed the pleasures of the table; they were epicures nearly for the same reason that devotees are so. The abbé de la Ville, for instance, was the most attentive man in the world to procure good wine. His steward went every year to gather the unpressed wine from the best cellars in Bur-

gundy, and kept the casks always in his eye.

Dubois, the first war clerk, was the one who regarded me with the most cordial friendship. He would have done me every service that his place allowed, had I given him an opportunity. But with regard to myself, I had enjoyment only in view; and if I derived any advantage from the acquaintance of the first clerks, it was quite spontaneous on their part, and without any solicitation from me. Of this, you will soon see an instance.

Among these laborious sybarites, the most lively, seducing, and voluptuous, though of the weakest health, was Cromot, who has made so brilliant a figure under a succession of ministers. The easy and agreeable manner in which he did business, and, in particular, his dexterity, captivated them in spite of themselves.

When I knew him, he was the intimate and favourite secretary of M. de Machault. This was an acquaintance

which many would have envied, but which I valued only for the pleasure it yielded. At the same time, fortune, studying my interest, unknown to myself, brought me at Versailles into the company of a lady, whose acquaintance I found no less useful. She was the particular friend of Bouret, the farmer general, who had the charge of appointing to vacant offices. This woman, who soon became my friend, and continued so till her death, was the lively and agreeable Madame Filleul. She, was staying supper at Versailles, and I was invited to sup along with her; I excused myself by saying, that I was obliged to return to Paris. She immediately offered to take me, and I accepted a place in her carriage. On our becoming acquainted, she spoke of me to her friend Bouret, and probably inspired him with some desire of knowing me. Circumstances were thus prepared, the most favourable to the dear object of my wishes.

My eldest sister was come to the age of being married; and though I could give her but a small portion, a number of suitable offers presented themselves. I preferred the man whose character and talents I knew to be the best; and my choice proved to be the same that my sister would have made, had she followed her own inclination. My schoolfellow Odde had, ever since he left school, been remarkable for piety, for propriety of conduct, and for application to business. His character was mild and gay, full of candour, and perfectly uniform; his morals were incorruptible, and he was always like himself. He is still alive, nor do I believe that the world contains a purer soul. In him, manhood produced no change, but that of passing from the age of innocence, to the age of virtue. His father, at his death, had left him little fortune; but, in its stead, the inheritance of a rare and precious friend. This friend, in whose praise I have often heard M. Turgot speak, was a M. de

Malesaigne, a genuine philosopher, who, in our remote village, spent his life almost alone, reading Tacitus, Plutarch, Montaigne; taking care of his lands, and cultivating his gardens. 'Who would believe,' said Turgot to me, 'that a little village of Limosin, should contain such a man? I never met with any person who, on subjects of government, was better informed, or thought more judiciously.' It was this worthy friend of M. Odde, who requested me to give him the hand of my sister. I was pleased; but his letter appeared to me to insinuate a hope, that Odde, through my interest, might obtain an office. I replied, that I would do every thing in my power for him; but that my interest not being so great as was supposed in my own province, I was sure of nothing myself, and could therefore make no promise.' M. de Malesaigne replied, 'that my frank declaration was of more value than rash assurances; and the marriage was celebrated.

A month after, Bouret came to employ himself, along with the minister of the finances, in filling up the vacant places, and I dined with him at the house of our friend Cromot. It would have been difficult to bring together two men of a more lively and ready wit, or fuller of ingenious sallies. Yet, in Cromot, you saw more ease, more habitual grace and facility; but Bouret was more eagerly desirous of pleasing, and threw in his observations more happily. This dinner was animated by the gaiety of both, and I soon became master of their tone of conversation. But, as we left table, Bouret recounted a long list of candidates for vacant places, and of persons soliciting for them. These were all persons of importance; the duke such-a-one, the marchioness such-another, the princes of the blood, the royal family; in short, the whole court and city united. 'Well,' said I, 'what a dilemma have I got into? I have married my sister to a well-informed young man, ver-

sant in business, with a great share, both of understanding and virtue, and all the portion I could give him, was the hope of obtaining an office through my poor interest? I must write and tell him to give up all thoughts of it.'—'Why,' said Bouret, 'should you do your sister an ill office by distressing her husband? Love is soon cooled by bad spirits; therefore leave them hope, it is a good thing till something better come.'

They left me in order to do business with the minister; and when I was at home, a clerk of the office came from them and asked my brother-in-law's name. He got a place that very evening. I need not say how ardently next day I expressed my gratitude. This was the era of a long friendship between Bouret and myself, of which I shall say more hereafter.

Yet the place given to M. Odde, appeared to me both too indolent and too obscure for a man of his talents. I exchanged it for one which was more diffi-

cult, and of less value, in order that his abilities becoming thus known, might contribute to his advancement. On his way there, his wife and he came to see me at Paris; and I cannot describe my sister's joy at meeting with me. I had them with me for some days; and they were received by my friends with a kindness for which I felt extremely grateful. At the dinners that were given us, it was an affecting spectacle to see the eyes of my sister continually rivetted upon me, unable to satiate herself with the pleasure of viewing her brother. Hers indeed, was less a fraternal than a filial affection.

Scarce had she arrived at Saumur, than she formed an intimacy with a relation of Madame de Pompadour, whose husband had a place in that city worth two thousand crowns. It was in the salt office. This young man, called M. de Blois, was seized with the same illness of which my father, my mother, and my brother had died. We knew

too well that it was incurable; and Madame de Blois did not conceal from my sister that her husband had but a short time to live. 'My good friend,' said she, 'it would be at least some consolation to me were M. Odde to succeed him in his place. Madame de Pompadour will have the disposal of it; get your brother to apply to her in your favour. My sister gave me this information, of which I availed myself, and obtained a promise of the situation. But, on the death of M. de Blois, I was informed by Madame de Pompadour's steward, that she had given this very place as a marriage portion, to a girl in whom she took an interest. Struck, as with a thunderbolt, I went to call upon her, and as she was passing to go to mass, I asked, with a respectful confidence, for the employment which she had promised me, for my sister's husband. 'I have forgot you,' said she, walking on, 'and have given it to another; but you shall have something as good.' I waited her re-

turn, and asked a moment's audience. She allowed me to follow her.

'Madam,' said I, 'my petition is no longer for employment or money, but it is for my honour, of which I beseech you not to deprive me; for, by doing so, you would give me a death-blow.' She was struck with this introduction; and I continued: 'Thinking myself as sure of the place you promised, as if already in possession, I mentioned it to my brother in law. He told in Saumur that I had your promise; he wrote it to his family and mine; it is thus spread over two provinces; I myself, talking of your kindness, have boasted of it both at Versailles and Paris. Now, Madam, no one will be convinced that you could have granted the place to another, after promising it formally to me. It is well known, that when inclined to favour any one, you have a thousand ways of doing so. Thus, I alone shall be dishonoured by the accusation of falsehood and groundless boasting. Madam, I have

learned to struggle with adversity, and to live in indigence; but I cannot live in shame, despised by every virtuous man. You kindly offer to make a compensation to my brother-in-law; but, Madam, after I am branded as an impudent liar, will you restore me the reputation of an honest man, of which alone I am ambitious? Can your benefits wipe off the stain it will have received? Make a compensation, Madam, to your other charges for the place, which a moment's forgetfulness has made you promise. You may easily procure them one more advantageous. But do not inflict upon me this irreparable injury, which would drive me to the utmost despair.' She tried to persuade me to wait, assuring me, that my sister should lose nothing. But I persisted in saying, that 'having boasted of obtaining the place of Saumur, I would have no other, were it a hundred times better.' After saying these words, I withdrew, and the place was given me.

I had, as you see, and as you will have occasion to see again, means of making my fortune, which might have raised my ambition; but having provided for the welfare of my family, I was so satisfied and so peaceful, that I desired nothing further. The family with whom I associated most intimately and most habitually at Versailles, was that of Madame de Chalut, an excellent woman, who had not much wit, but a great deal of good sense, and whose character was inestimably mild, equal, and sincere. After being favourite waiting-maid on the first dauphiness, she had been transferred to the second, by whom she was still more beloved. This princess had not a more faithful, a tenderer, or sincerer friend; nay, she had not, perhaps, another real friend in France. Accordingly, her heart and her most secret thoughts were open to her; and in the most delicate and difficult circumstances, she had recourse to her alone for advice and consolation. These sentiments of confi-

dence and attachment were communicated from the mind of the dauphinness, to that of the dauphin. Wishing to marry Mademoiselle Varanchan (for that was her maiden name) and to give her a rich portion, they were both determined to sell their most valuable jewels, had not the comptroller-general prevented them, by obtaining from the king an appointment to the office of farmer-general for the man who should marry her. This sufficiently shews the interest she possessed with her master and mistress, and I may add that there was nothing she could not have done for me. Yet, though twenty years her friend, I never asked any thing; I had formed so noble and pure an idea of friendship, and felt it so warmly in my own breast, that I should have thought it profaned and degraded by the mixture of any ambitious views. The more Madame Chalut would have been disposed to lavish her good offices, the more I thought it became me to be discreet and disinterested.

I failed not to embrace opportunities of paying my court to her master and mistress, but solely with the view of pleasing her; and if I sometimes composed verses for them, it was she alone that inspired them. This brings to my recollection a singular enough scene.

Madam de Chalut, after her marriage, still continued in the service of the dauphiness, and became only the more assiduous in her attentions. This princess was so fond of her, that she could not bear her absence without affliction. She always kept house therefore at Versailles; and every time I went there, before making it my residence, her house was my home. The dauphin's recovery from the small pox, was celebrated there by a fête, to which I was invited. I found Madame de Chalut in a transport of joy, and of admiration at the conduct of her mistress, who had watched night and day by her husband's bedside, and had taken the most tender care of him during his illness. My heart was pene-

trated by the animated account she gave of it. I wrote a poem on this affecting subject; the interesting nature of the picture rendered the painter successful; and these verses met at court with at least a degree of favour, such as arises from being suited to the occasion. The prince and princess, on reading them, were affected even to tears. Madame de Chalut was directed to tell me, that they had been much interested by the perusal, and would be happy to see me for the purpose of expressing it themselves. 'Present yourself,' said she, 'to-morrow, at the time of their dinner; you will be satisfied with the reception they intend to give you.' I was careful to keep the appointment. There was little company. I was placed opposite to them, at two steps from the table, quite by myself, and in a very conspicuous situation. As soon as they saw me, they whispered to each other, then turned their eyes upon me, and whispered again. I saw their thoughts taken up about me; yet both alternately allowed what

they were going to say to expire, as it were, on their lips. Thus passed the time of dinner, after which the whole company went away, and I among the rest. Madame Chalut had served at table, and you may suppose how impatient she was under this long mute scene. I was to dine with her, that we might have an opportunity of expressing our mutual pleasure at the reception I should have met with. I went and waited for her; and when she came, I said, 'Well, Madam, must I not be very much flattered by all the obliging and agreeable things that have been said to me?'—'Do you know,' said she, 'how they spent the whole time of dinner? Just in inviting each other to speak to you, without either being able to summon courage sufficient.'—'I really did not know,' said I, 'that I had been so dignified a character, and must certainly be proud of the respect with which I have inspired the dauphin and dauphiness.' This contrast of ideas appeared to us so diverting, that we laughed heartily;

and I considered, as said, every thing they had intended to say.

The species of kindness with which I was viewed in this court, procured me, however, attention and credit on an interesting occasion. Aurora, daughter of Mademoiselle Verriere, was registered as daughter of Marshal Saxe; and, after the death of her father, the dauphiness intended to take charge of her education; this was her mother's highest ambition. But the dauphin took it into his head to say, that she was my daughter; and the assertion produced its effect. Madame de Chalut mentioned it laughing; but I took up this jest of the dauphin's in the most serious manner; I accused him of levity; and offered to prove that my connection with Mademoiselle Verriere, was only during the marshal's journey into Prussia, more than a year after the birth of this child. I said that it would be an inhuman mode of depriving her of her real father, to make me be considered as such. Madame de Chalut under

took to plead this cause before the dauphiness; and the dauphin yielded. Aurora was therefore educated at their expence, in the convent at S^t. Cloud; and Madame de Chalut, who had a country house at S^t. Cloud, undertook, out of love to me, and at my entreaty, to superintend her education.

I have still to speak of two other particular acquaintances, which I formed at Versailles; one was an acquaintance of mere convenience, with Quesnai, Madame de Pompadour's physician; the other, with Madame de Marchais, and her intimate friend the Count d'Angiviller, a young man of a noble character. With the lady, I soon formed a very close intimacy, which has lasted for forty years, and which neither time nor events have been able to alter.

I shall begin with Quesnai, as being the least interesting. He was lodged, not very spaciously, in the house of Madame de Pompadour, and thought of nothing, from morning to night, but

political and rural economy. He imagined he had reduced the science to calculations and axioms, whose proof was irresistible; and as he was forming a school, he chose to take the trouble of explaining to me his new doctrine, with the view of making me a disciple and proselyte. Wishing to make him my mediator with Madame de Pompadour, I bent my whole understanding to comprehend these truths which he held out as self-evident, but which appeared to me quite vague and obscure. It was in vain to attempt persuading him that I understood what, in fact, was to me wholly unintelligible. But I listened with patient attention, and allowed him to hope that I might at length be enlightened and impressed with his doctrine. This would have been enough to gain his favour; but I did more. I applauded an occupation which appeared to me really deserving of esteem; for it tended to recommend agriculture in a country where it was too much despised, and to turn the

researches of men of science into this direction. I had even an opportunity, offered by himself, of flattering him on a subject which he viewed with such interest.

An Irishman, of the name of Patullo, having written a book, in which he proved the superiority of English agriculture over ours, had, through Quesnai, obtained permission to dedicate this book to Madame de Pompadour; but his dedication was ill written. Madame de Pompadour, after having read it, bid him apply to me, and ask me, in her name, to give it a careful revisal. I found it easier to write a new one, and speaking of country labourers, I placed their condition in so interesting a point of view, that Madame de Pompadour read the dedication with tears in her eyes. Quesnai perceived it, and I cannot express how much he was pleased with me. His way of serving me with the marchioness, was now and then to drop a

word or two in my praise, seemingly undesigned, but which yet produced its effect.

With regard to his character, I shall mention only one anecdote, which will shew it in a clear point of view. He had received his appointment through the interest of the old duke de Villeroy, and of a countess d'Estrade, the friend and flatterer of Madame d'Etioles. This last lady, not suspecting that she was cherishing a serpent in her bosom, had raised her from a wretched condition, and brought her to court. Quesnai was therefore bound by gratitude to Madame de Estrade, when that intriguing woman abandoned her benefactress, attached herself wholly to the count d'Argenson, and joined with him in a conspiracy against Madame de Pompadour.

It is difficult to conceive how a woman, so disagreeable in every respect, should, notwithstanding the ugliness of her mind and person, have seduced a man of d'Argenson's character, understanding, and age. But she had the merit of sa-

crificing to him the person to whom she owed her all, and of being, for love of him, the most ungrateful of creatures.

Quesnai, however, without being affected by these hostile passions, continued, on one side, to be the incorruptible servant of Madame de Pompadour, without forgetting, on the other, the obligations he owed to Madame d'Estrade. That lady assured M. d'Argenson of his fidelity; and though he made no secret of going sometimes to visit them, Madame de Pompadour felt no anxiety on that account. They, on their side, felt as much confidence in him, as if no tie had attached him to Madame de Pompadour.

Now, listen to what was told me after d'Argenson's exile, by Dubois, who had been his secretary. He himself shall speak, I recollect perfectly his narrative, and you may imagine yourself hearing it.

'With the view,' said he, 'of supplanting Madame de Pompadour, M. d'Argenson and Madame d'Estrade, had inspired the king with a passion for the young and handsome Madame de Choiseul, the wife of Menin. The intrigue had made such progress, that the catastrophe was now at hand. The rendezvous was given; the young lady had gone, and the interview still continued, while M. d'Argenson, Madame d'Estrade, Quesnai, and myself, were together in the minister's closet. We two were mute witnesses; but M. d'Argenson and Madame d'Estrade, were extremely interested, and extremely anxious, about what should be the issue. After waiting a long time, Madame de Choiseul enters, with her hair dishevelled, and in a state of disorder which announced her triumph. Madame d'Estrade flies to meet her with open arms, and asks if she has gained her point. 'Yes,' replied she, 'I have; I am beloved; he is happy; she is to be dismissed; I have

received his promise.' At these words there was a loud burst of joy through the cabinet. Quesnai alone shewed no emotion. 'Doctor,' said d'Argenson to him, 'there shall be no change in your condition, and we hope you will remain.' Quesnai rose, and coldly replied 'My lord, I have been attached to Madame de Pompadour in her prosperity, and shall be equally so in her disgrace;' and he immediately went away. We were petrified; but nobody felt the least mistrust. 'I know him,' said Madame d'Estrades; 'he is not a man to betray us.' And indeed it was not by him that the secret was revealed, and that the marchioness de Pompadour was delivered from her rival. Such was the story of Dubois.

Whilst storms were thus forming and dispersing beneath the apartment of Quesnai, he was drawing out his axioms and his calculations of political economy, as quietly, and with as much indifference for these court disturbances, as if he had been at a hundred miles distance. Be-

low, they were deliberating on peace, on war, on the choice of generals, on the removal of ministers; while we, in our apartment, were treating of agriculture, were calculating the net produce, and sometimes were dining gaily with Diderot, d'Alembert, Duclos, Helvetius, Turgot, Buffon. Madame de Pompadour, not being able to prevail upon this group of philosophers to come down to her drawing room, came up herself to see and talk with them at table.

The other acquaintance of which I have spoken, was infinitely dearer to me. Madame de Marchais was not only, as I thought, the most lively and agreeable of women, but the sincerest and best of friends, most active, most steady, most deeply interested in whatever concerned me. Imagine all the charms of character, mind, and language, united in the highest degree, nay, even those of external appearance, though she was not beautiful; imagine, above all, a manner the most gracefully charming: such was

this young enchantress. Her soul, inexpressibly active, gave to her features and expression, a dazzling and delightful animation. Not one of her features was such as a painter would have chosen; but, all together, they had an agreeable effect, which the pencil would in vain attempt to imitate. Her figure, though small, was well rounded; and her deportment was such as to communicate to her whole person a dignified and commanding character. Her mind was exquisitely and extensively cultivated, from the most light and shewy literature, to the loftiest conceptions of genius; her ideas possessed the utmost acuteness, precision, correctness, and rapidity; her expressions were always easily and happily chosen, flowing as it were spontaneously, and as quick as thought. Her heart was excellent, her kindness inexhaustible; in obliging her friends, she exerted the most uniform and unwearied activity; and all with an air so soft and engaging, that you would

have been tempted to suspect artifice, could artifice have ever assumed that continued and unalterable equality, which was always the distinctive mark of nature, and the only one of her appearances, which art could never imitate.

Her society was composed of all the most agreeable persons about court, and of all those men of letters whose character was most respectable, and talents most distinguished. To court ladies, she was a model of the most elegant and dignified politeness; young women came to her house to study her air and manner. With men of letters, she was on a level with the most ingenious and best informed. No one talked with more ease, precision, and method. Her silence was animated by the fire of a spirited and attentive look; she divined mens thoughts; and her replies were arrows which never missed their aim. But the most astonishing thing in her conversation, was its variety, and her just sense of what was becoming and suitable.

She had always the word proper for the thing, for the occasion, and for the person; she was mistress of the nicest distinctions and shades of expression, and said the thing which was best to the whole company, and to each in particular. Such was the manner in which this singular woman was able to animate, to embellish, and, as it were, to spread enchantment round her house.

She was a great musician, sung with taste, and had an agreeable voice; she had assisted therefore at the little opera of Madame de Pompadour; and, after this amusement ceased, had continued her friend. She was more careful than myself to keep up that lady's kindness for me, and never missed an opportunity of advancing me in her favour.

Her young friend, M. d'Angiviller, was rendered very interesting by one particular circumstance. He possessed every thing which can render a man both agreeable and happy; a handsome figure, a

well cultivated mind, taste in literature and the arts, an exalted soul, a good heart, the esteem of the king, the particular favour of the dauphin, and, at court, a celebrity and respect seldom acquired at his age; yet he always either was, or appeared to be, secretly unhappy. He was inseparable from Madame de Marchais, yet sad and silent in her presence, always the more serious as she was more gay, and trembling, as it were, at the very sound of her voice. His character possessed pride, force, and energy; yet, whenever she spoke to him, he was confused, viewed her with a suffering look, and answered in a feeble, hesitating, and almost extinguished voice. In her absence, on the contrary, he displayed his fine expression of countenance, talked well, and with warmth, and gave up his mind and soul freely to the enjoyment of society. Nothing resembled more the condition of a lover rigorously treated, and imperiously ruled over. Yet they spent their life together in the most inti-

mate union; and it was very evident that there was no other man whom she preferred to him. Had this character of an unhappy lover been supported only for a short time, it might have been thought assumed: but he was the same for fifteen years; he was the same after the death of M. de Marchais as in his life time, and always till the time when his widow became Madame d'Angiviller. Then the scene was quite changed; the whole authority was transferred to the husband, while the wife became all deference and complaisance, with an air of submissive respect. In my whole observation of human manners, I never met with any thing so singular as this voluntary and sudden exchange, which formed afterwards a lot equally happy for both.

In their attachment towards me, they always were, and still are, perfectly of the same mind; mine towards them will never alter.

Among my amusements, I have not mentioned the drama, though I had every

opportunity of enjoying it, at the court theatre. But I seldom went; and mention it here only to fix the era of an interesting revolution in the art of theatrical representation.

I had long carried on a regular dispute with Mademoiselle Clairon, about the best mode of reciting tragic poetry. Her acting appeared to me too splendid, too impetuous; she wanted pliancy and variety; and her immoderate violence partook more of fury than of sensibility. Of this, I endeavoured, though cautiously, to convince her.' 'You possess,' said I, 'every means of excelling in your art; yet, great as you are, you might easily rise above yourself, by using more temperately those powers of which you are now so lavish. You object your own brilliant successes, and those which you have gained for me; you object the opinion and the advice of your friends; you object the authority of M. de Voltaire, who himself recites his lines in a laboured tone, and asserts that tragic poetry

requires the same pomp in acting, as in style; while I, in return, can urge only an irresistible feeling, which assures me that acting, like style, may be dignified, majestic, tragic, and yet simple; that tones, in order to be animated and deeply affecting, require gradations, shades, unforeseen and sudden transitions, which they can never have, when strained and laboured.' She sometimes said, rather hastily, that I would never leave her at rest till she performed tragedy in a familiar and comic tone. 'No, no, Madam,' said I; 'that tone you will never have; nature forbids it; you have it not at the very moment you are speaking. The sound of your voice, your look, your utterance, all your attitudes are naturally noble. Dare only to trust to this admirable nature; be assured your tragic powers will only be heightened.'

Other counsels than mine prevailed, so that, weary of importuning her in vain, I had desisted, when the actress of herself suddenly went into my opinion.

She was going to perform Roxana on the small theatre at Versailles. I called upon her as she was dressing, and found her, for the first time, attired like a sultana; no hoop, her arms half-naked, and in the truth of oriental costume. I congratulated her upon this change. 'Well,' said she, 'you shall now be satisfied with me. I have just been on a journey to Bourdeax, where I found only a very small house, to which I was obliged to accommodate myself. It occurred to me to bring down my acting, and to make a trial of that simple manner which you have recommended so strongly. It met with the greatest success. I am going to try it again on this small theatre; come and hear me; and if it be as successful here, adieu to the old recitation.'

The event surpassed both our expectations. It was no longer the actress, but Roxana herself that was heard and seen. The audience were quite astonished and delighted. They all asked, 'Where are we? we never heard any thing like this.'

I saw her after the play, and was going to talk of the success she had met with. 'Ah!' said she, 'do'nt you see that I am undone? In all my characters, the costume must now be observed; the truth of dress must be conjoined with that of acting; all my rich theatrical wardrobe must be thrown away. I lose clothes to the value of ten thousand crowns*; however the sacrifice is made. You shall see me in eight days perform Electra as naturally as I have done Roxana.'

It was the Electra of Crebillon. Instead of the ridiculous hoop, and wide mourning gown which she used to wear, she appeared in the mere dress of a slave, with her hair dishevelled, and her arms covered with long chains. She was admirable; and some time after, she was still more sublime in the Electra of Voltaire. Voltaire had made her recite this part with an unvaried and doleful monotony; but when spoken naturally, it acquired a beauty unknown to himself. On hearing it acted on his theatre at Ferney,

* Twelve hundred guineas.

where she went to see him, he exclaimed, bathed in tears, and transported with admiration, 'It is not I who am the author of that; it is herself; she has created her part.' And indeed the infinity of shades which she introduced, and the manner in which she expressed the passions, of which this part is full, rendered it that perhaps, of all others, in which she was most astonishing.

Paris, as well as Versailles, recognized in this change the genuine tragic tone, and the increased appearance of probability which theatrical representation derives from a proper observation of costume. From that time, therefore, all the actors were forced to abandon their fringed gloves, their enormous periwigs, their hats stuck up with feathers, and all the fantastic trappings which had so long shocked the eyes of men of taste. Lekain himself followed Mademoiselle Clairon's example; and from that time, the perfection of their talents rendered them rivals worthy of each other.

It may be easily supposed that a mixture of peaceful occupations, and varied amusements, would have more than indemnified me for the pleasures of Paris. But I had the additional advantage of being allowed to go there when I chose, and spend the time during which the duties of my place left me at liberty. M. de Marigny himself, at the solicitation of my old acquaintances, invited me to visit them.

There was one particular in his conduct towards me, which I could not avoid remarking, and which would perhaps have wounded the pride of another. A little philosophy, however, made me see the reason. In any other house than his own, nobody took greater pleasure in my company. When we dined or supped with our common friends, he enjoyed the esteem and friendship that was expressed for me, more than I did myself; he was flattered, he was grateful for it. It was by him that I was introduced to Madame Geoffrin; and out of her regard for him, I was ad-

mitted to her dinner of artists, as well as to that of men of letters. Lastly, from the time I ceased to be secretary of buildings, as will hereafter appear, nobody expressed a more eager desire to have me, both as his guest and his friend. Well, so long as I filled the place of secretary under him, he never once allowed himself to invite me to dinner. The ministers did not eat with their clerks; he had assumed this etiquette; and to have made an exception in my favour, would have spread jealousy and discontent through all his offices. He never explained himself upon this subject; but you may see that he was so attentive as to let me understand it.

The years which I spent at Versailles, were those during which the philosophical spirit was in the greatest activity. D'Alembert and Diderot had hoisted its standard in the immense manufactory of the Encyclopædia, and all the most distinguished men of letters had rallied round them. Voltaire, on his return from Berlin, whence

he had driven poor D'Arnaud, but had not been able to keep his own ground, retired to Geneva, and thence he fanned that spirit of liberty, of independence, and of innovation, which has since made so much progress. In his wrath against the king, he had done imprudent things; but a much greater imprudence was committed by those who, when he wished to return into his native country, obliged him to continue in a land of liberty. The king's answer, *let him stay where he is*, was not well judged. His attacks were not of a kind which can be stopt at the frontiers. Versailles, where he would not have been so daring as in Switzerland and at Geneva, should have been given him as his place of exile. The priests should have opened to him that magnificent prison, the same which Cardinal Richelieu had assigned to the great nobility.

When he applied to have his title of gentleman in ordinary to the king returned to him, he was himself holding out the end of a chain, with which

they might have fixed him. I must give this testimony in favour of Madame de Pompadour, that she was against his being banished. She took an interest in him, and sometimes inquired if I had heard from him; and when I answered that it was in her power to hear of him from a shorter distance, she answered with a sigh, 'Ah, no, it is not.'

From Geneva, however, Voltaire continued to animate the labourers employed in the Encyclopedie. I was of the number; and every time I went to Paris, my greatest pleasure was that of meeting with the rest. D'Alembert and Diderot were satisfied with my performances; and this connection drew closer and closer the ties of a friendship which lasted during their whole lives. With D'Alembert, it was more intimate, more tender, more steadily cultivated; but not less true and unalterable with honest Diderot, whom I always saw with such pleasure, and listened to with such delight.

To confess the truth, I at last felt

that the distance from Paris to Versailles would interpose too long intervals between the moments of happiness which I tasted in the society of men of letters. Such of them as I most loved and respected, were kind enough to say, that we were formed for living together; and they held out the French academy as a prospect on which I might fix my views. From time to time, therefore, I felt a renewal of my desire to enter into the career of literature. But, as a previous step, I wished to secure a fixed and independent livelihood; and this Madame de Pompadour and her brother would have been very glad to procure me. Of this, the following is a clear proof.

In 1757, after the atrocious attempt on the king's person,* and the great change in the ministry, when M. d'Argenson and M. de Machault were dismissed on the same day, M. Rouillé had obtained the office of postmaster-general, of which the secretaryship was a sinecure of two

* See note (1) at the end.

thousand crowns * a year. It occurred to me to ask the survivorship, convinced that M. de Rouillé, in his new place, would not refuse the first thing Madame de Pompadour asked. I applied, therefore, through Dr. Quesnai, for an audience. It was fixed for to-morrow evening; and I spent the whole night in contriving what I was to say. My brain got heated; I lost sight of my own object, and dwelling solely on the misfortunes of the state, determined to avail myself of this audience, in order to inculcate useful truths. The hours of sleep were employed in composing my harangue, and the morning in writing it out, in order to have it more fully in my mind. I went to Quesnai's in the evening, at the appointed hour. Quesnai, who was busy tracing the *zig-zag* of the *net* produce, did not so much as ask what I was going to do at Madame de Pompadour's. She sent for me; I went down, and was introduced into her closet. 'Madam,' said I, 'M. Rouillé has been made postmaster-

* £250

general; the place of secretary to the post-office is in his appointment. Moncrif, who now holds it, is very old. Would it be abusing your kindness, were I to intreat you to obtain for me the survivorship? Nothing can suit me better than this place, and to it I bound my ambition for life.' She replied, that she had promised it to Darboulin, (one of her intimates); but that if it could be got for me, she would make him give it up.

After returning thanks—'Madam,' said I, 'I shall now astonish you. The benefit which I ask is not that in which my mind is at present most interested; it is the situation of the kingdom; the disorder into which it is plunged by this endless quarrel between the parliament and clergy, in which I see the royal authority, like a vessel, driven by the tempest among rocks, while not a man in council is capable of steering it.' After enlarging upon this picture, I added that of a war, which required all the forces of the state, both by land and sea, to be

sent abroad, and which produced such a necessity for internal tranquillity and concord, for the union of minds and mutual concert. After which, I resumed—'So long as M. d'Argenson and De Machault were in power, we could ascribe to their disunion the intestine dissensions with which the kingdom is rent, as well as the acts of rigour which, instead of tranquillizing, have exasperated these dissensions. But now that these ministers are dismissed, and that the men who supply their place possess no ascendancy and no influence; consider, Madam, that the public have now their eyes upon you, and will henceforth address to you their reproaches and complaints, if the evil continues—their blessings, if you procure an effectual remedy. Wait not till necessity commands, or till another performs it; you would then lose all merit, and would be alone accused of the evil which you had not done. All those who are attached to you feel the same anxiety with me, and form the same wishes.'

She answered, that she was not dismayed, and did not wish her friends to be so; however she was obliged to me for the zeal I expressed; but bade me not be so uneasy, as exertions were then making to quiet all disturbances. She added, that she would speak that very day to M. Rouillé, and desired me to call upon her to-morrow morning.

'I have no good news to tell you,' said she, when I called; 'the survivorship of Moncrif is already given away. It was the first thing the new postmaster-general asked of the king; and he has procured it for his old secretary Gaudin. Think if there is any thing else I can do for you.'

It was not easy to find a place which suited me so well as this. Yet, shortly after, I thought myself sure of getting one more agreeable to me, because it would be of my own creation, and would enable me to leave honourable traces of my labours. This requires me to introduce to your acquaintance a character

which has shone like a meteor, and whose lustre, though weaker, is not yet extinguished. Were I to speak only of myself, the whole would be soon said; but as the history of my life is a walk through which I am leading my children, they must be made to observe the persons with whom I have any connection in my passage through the world.

The abbé Bernis, escaped from the seminary of S^t. Sulpice, where he had succeeded but ill, was an amatory poet, fresh, blooming, and shewy in his dress; who, along with the *gentil* Bernard,* used, with his pretty verses, to amuse the gay suppers at Paris. Voltaire called him the nosegay-girl of Parnassus; and at Paris, he was more familiarly called *Babet*, from the name of a pretty nosegay-girl of that time. Without any other merit than this, he got himself appointed cardinal and ambassador at the court of Rome. He had in vain solicited the old bishop of Mirepoix, (Boyer), for a pension on some abbey. The bishop, who

* See note (2) at the end.

set little value on amatory poetry, and who knew what sort of life this abbé led, had harshly declared, that so long as he (Boyer) should be in office, he had nothing to hope; to which the abbé answered, '*My lord, I shall wait;*' an expression which was thought happy, and afterwards became current in the world. His whole fortune then consisted in the canonry of Brioude, which was of no value, because of his non-residence; and in a little sinecure at Boulogne-sur-mer, which he had got, I know not how.

He was in this condition when it became known that, at the hunting parties in the forest of Senart, the fair Madame d'Etioles had been the object of the king's attentions. Presently the abbé solicits permission to go and pay his court to the young lady; and the Countess d'Estrade, with whom he was acquainted, obtains this favour for him. He arrives at Etioles by water, with his little packet under his arm. He is desired to recite his verses; he amuses, he applies his

whole study to make himself agreeable; and by that superficial wit and poetical varnish, in which consisted his only talent, he succeeds so completely, that, in the absence of the king, he was made a confident of the letters which were exchanged between the two lovers. Nothing suited better the character of his mind and style, than a service of this kind. Accordingly, as soon as the new mistress was installed at court, one of the first effects of her favour was to procure him a pension of an hundred louis on the privy purse, with apartments in the Thuileries, which she furnished at her own expence. I saw him in these apartments, under the palace roof, the happiest of men, with his pension and Brocatelle furniture. As he was of noble birth, his patroness advised him to exchange the chapter of Brioude for that of Lyons; and she obtained a new set of ornaments for the latter, in honour of the new canon. At the same time, he was the public and declared lover of the beautiful princess of

Rohan, which placed him, in the fashionable world, on the footing of a man of quality. Then, all of a sudden, he was appointed ambassador to Venice. He there paid particular attention to the nephews of Pope Ganganelli, and by that means obtained the favour of the court of Rome. He was recalled from Venice, to be a member of the king's council; and concluded, with Count Staremberg, the treaty of Versailles. In return for which, on the resignation of M. Rouillé, he obtained the office of minister for foreign affairs; and shortly after, a cardinal's hat, which was in the nomination of the court of Vienna.

On his return from his embassy, I saw him; and he treated me as before his prosperity, yet with a shade of dignity, and a little consciousness of being now His Excellency; than which nothing could be more natural. After he had signed the treaty of Versailles, I congratulated him upon it; and he expressed a desire that I should address a poem to the king,

in celebration of the advantages derived from this great and happy alliance. I replied, that it would be easier, and more agreeable to me, to address it to himself. He did not deny that this would flatter him. Well, I wrote this poem; he was pleased, and his friend Madame de Pompadour was delighted; she wished it to be printed and presented to the king, which was no way disagreeable to the diplomatic abbé. (I say nothing of the embassies to Spain and Vienna, to which he was appointed, but did not go, having something better to do at Versailles). Soon after, on an urgent occasion, when he was greatly in want of a safe and diligent man, who could write a good style, he did me the honour of applying to me. The circumstances were as follow.—The king of Prussia, having entered Saxony with an army of sixty thousand men, had published a manifesto, to which the court of Vienna had replied. This reply had been translated into Teutonic French, and sent to Fontainebleau, the present

residence of the court. It was to be presented to the king on the Sunday following, and Count Staremberg was to distribute five hundred copies on that day. On Wednesday evening, the abbé de Bernis asked me to call upon him. He was closetted with the Count de Staremberg. They both expressed their affliction at having to publish so ill translated a manifesto, and said that it would be extremely agreeable both to the court of Versailles and Vienna, if I would get it hastily corrected and printed, so as to be presented and published in four days. We read it together; and, besides the Germanisms of which it was full, I took the liberty of pointing out a number of arguments, which were either ill-founded, or obscurely stated. They gave me full liberty to make every correction; and having fixed a meeting for next day, at the same hour, I went and sat down to my work. At the same time, the abbé de Bernis wrote to M. de Marigny, begging that he would give me

up for the rest of the week, as he had occasion for me on a pressing business, which I had chosen to undertake.

I employed almost the whole night and the following day, in revising this manifesto, and getting it transcribed, so that by the hour of rendezvous I brought it, if not elegantly, yet at least more decently written. They bestowed the utmost praises on my industry and diligence. 'But this,' said the abbé, 'is not all; we must have this memorial in our hands printed to-morrow morning by the hour of the king's rising; and thus, my dear Marmontel, you must crown your work.'—'My lord,' replied I, 'in half an hour I shall be ready to set out. Order me a post chaise, and write a few lines in your own hand to the lieutenant of police, that the censor may not retard the printing; I promise to be here early on Sunday morning.' I kept my word; but I arrived overcome with fatigue and watching. Some days after, he asked me to give him an account of my expences

for travelling and printing. I gave him a very exact one, specifying each article, and he paid me the precise amount. From that time, I never heard more of the matter.

However, he continued always repeating, that one of the advantages which he hoped to derive from the favour he enjoyed, was the power of being useful to me. When, therefore, he became secretary for foreign affairs, I imagined that if his department presented any employment in which I could be useful to the state, to him, and to myself, he would be disposed to give it me. Upon these foundations I established my present hope.

I knew that, at this time, the office for foreign affairs was a chaos, which the oldest clerks had much difficulty to unravel. To a new minister, therefore, whoever he was, his place was a long apprenticeship. Talking of Bernis himself, I had heard Bussy, one of these old clerks, say, 'Here is the eleventh

scholar whom the Abbé de la Ville and I have got sent to us;' now, this scholar was the master whom the dauphin had chosen to instruct him in politics; a very strange choice for a prince who seemed desirous of acquiring solid information.

I should have been doing a real service, therefore, both to the king, the dauphin, the minister, and the state itself, could I have introduced order and light into this chaos of past transactions. I made this proposal in a clear and distinct memorial which I presented to the Abbé de Bernis.

My plan was, first to distinguish the subjects of negociation according to their different relations, of place in regard to places, and of date, in regard to time. Beginning, then, at a period more or less distant, and dividing what followed, into a certain number of eras, I was to extract all interesting matter out of these portfolios of memorials and dispatches, to form successively out of them a pretty full historical view of the course of negociation,

in which I could point out the spirit of the different courts, the views of their cabinets, the political system of their councils, the characters of the kings and ministers; in a word, the springs which, during each particular era, had set these powers in motion. Three volumes of this course of diplomacy were to be annually put into the minister's hands; and perhaps, if written with care, the dauphin himself might have read them with satisfaction. Lastly, to bring the subjects more under his eye, a book of tables would have exhibited at a glance, under their proper heads, the respective negociations and their simultaneous effects in the courts and cabinets of Europe. For this immense labour, I asked only two clerks, apartments in the office, and the means of keeping up a frugal establishment. The Abbé de Bernis seemed delighted with my plan. 'Give me this memorial,' said he, after having read it, 'I see its excellence and usefulness more clearly than yourself. I will present it

to the king.' I never doubted of its success; I waited, but waited in vain; till at length, impatient to learn the effect, I put the question to him. 'Oh,' said he, with an absent air, as he stepped into his chair to go to council, 'that is connected with a general arrangement upon which nothing is yet decided.' This arrangement has since taken place. The king has caused two houses to be built, one for the war office, and the other for foreign affairs. My plan has, in part at least, been executed, but another has reaped the fruits. *Sic vos non vobis.* After this reply of the Abbé de Bernis, I saw him just once again, upon the day when he was going in a cardinal's dress (red cowl and stockings) and a *rochet* trimmed with the richest English point, to present himself before the king. I crossed his antichambers between two long rows of attendants, drest in new liveries of scarlet, fringed with gold. I went into his closet, and found him as proud as a peacock, more blooming than ever, admiring his

own finery, and above all, never weary of looking at his *rochet* and his scarlet stockings. 'Am I not very well dressed?' said he. 'Very well,' said I, 'your Eminence becomes you wonderfully, and I am just come, my lord, to congratulate you.'—'And what do you think of my lacqueys?'—'I took them,' said I, 'for the gilded groupe who were come to compliment you.' These were the last words that passed between us.

I easily consoled myself for lying under no obligations to him, not only because I considered him only as a purp'ed fool, but because I soon saw him unkind and ungrateful towards his benefactress; for nothing is so burdensome as gratitude, when it is due to the ungrateful.

I was happier than he; for study and employment afforded me consolation under any little severities which fortune might inflict. But never having had much stoicism in my character, I paid

with less patience, a tribute of bodily pain which nature annually imposed. Though I commonly enjoyed good and full health, I was subject to a headach of a very singular kind. This disease is called the *clavus*, and has its seat under the eyebrow. It arises from the beating of an artery, every pulsation of which, like the wound of a dagger, pierces to the very soul. I cannot express how great the pain is; yet, however keen and deep, one spot alone is affected. This spot is above the eye, the place to which the pulse of an internal artery corresponds. I explain all this, that you may the better understand an interesting medical case.

For seven years, this headach returned at least once a year, and lasted twelve or fifteen days, not constantly, but with paroxysms like a fever, and every day at the same hour, with little variation; it lasted about six hours, announcing its approach by a tension in the neighbouring veins and fibres, and by stronger, though not quicker pulsations in the artery where

the pain was seated. At first, the pain was almost insensible; it constantly increased, and diminished in like manner towards the end of the paroxysm. But, for at least four hours, it was in full vigour. One astonishing circumstance is, that at the end of the paroxysm, there remained no trace of pain in this part, and that I had no return, either the rest of the day, or the following night, till next day at the hour of the new paroxysm. The physicians whom I consulted had in vain attempted to cure me. Bark, bleeding at the foot, emollient liquids, fumigations, sneezing powders, had been all tried unsuccessfully. Nay, some of these remedies, as bark, for instance, only irritated my complaint.

One of the queen's physicians, called Malouin, a man of considerable skil, but a greater Purgon than Purgon himself, had thought of making me wash it with vulnerary infusions. This did me no good; however, at the end of its accustomed period, the complaint went off. Malouin

was then quite elated with having performed so complete a cure. I did not disturb his triumph; but he laid hold of this opportunity to give me a lecture. 'Well, my friend,' said he, 'will you henceforth believe in medicine, and in the skill of physicians.' I assured him that I was a most staunch believer. 'No,' said he, 'you sometimes allow yourself to talk on this subject with some degree of levity. This injures you in the world. Observe, the most illustrious philosophers and men of letters have always respected our art;' and he quoted me some great names. 'Voltaire himself, who so seldom respects any thing, has always talked respectfully of medicine and physicians.' —'Aye, doctor, but there was one Moliere.'—'Well,' said he, fixing his eye upon me, and grasping my hand, 'well, how did he die.'

In short, my illness had returned upon me for the seventh year, when one day, in the height of my paroxysm, Genson, who had the charge of the dauphin's stables, came to call upon

me. Genson supplied the Encyclopedie with some excellent articles upon subjects connected with his trade. He had made the comparative anatomy of man and the horse his particular study; and nobody could be better informed, not only upon the diseases, but also upon the feeding and training of horses. Having little skill, however, in the art of writing, he had recourse to me to give his style a little revisal. He came with his papers at a time when I had been in torture for three hours. 'M. Genson,' said I, 'it is impossible to do any thing with you to day; my sufferings are too cruel. He saw my right eye inflamed, and all the fibres of my temple and eyelid beating and quivering. He asked what my illness was, which I told him; then, after learning some particulars of my constitution, mode of life, and common state of health, he said, 'Is it possible you can have been allowed so long to suffer under an illness which can be so easily cured?' —'What,' said I in amazement, 'do

you know any remedy?'—'Yes, I do; nothing can be easier. Your illness shall be mitigated to-morrow, and in three days it will be cured altogether.'—'How?' asked I, with a hope still faint and timid. 'When your ink is too thick and does not run,' said he, 'what do you do?'—'Put water in it.'—'Very well, put water into your lymph, it will run, and will no longer choke the glands of the pituitary membrane, which now confines the artery whose pulsations bruise the neighbouring nerves, and give you all this pain.'—'Is that indeed,' said I, 'the cause of my illness? Is that indeed the remedy?'—'Most assuredly,' said he, 'you have in that bone a little cavity called the *frontal sinus*. It is lined by a membrane, composed of little glands, which, in its natural state, is as thin as an oak leaf. Just now, it is thick and choked; there is an easy and certain method by which you must relieve it. Dine moderately to-day; let there be no ragouts, no pure wine, coffee, or liquours; and in

the evening, instead of supper, drink as much clear and fresh water as your stomach can well bear; to-morrow morning drink the same; observe this regimen for a few days, and be assured that to-morrow the attack will be weak, the next day almost insensible, and the day after there will be no such thing.'—'Ah! M. Genson,' said I, 'you shall be a divinity in my eyes, if your prophecy is fulfilled.' It actually was fulfilled. Genson came to see me again; I embraced him, and told him of my cure. 'Well,' says he, 'but it is not enough to have cured you; we must now secure you against a relapse; for, till the membrane has recovered its tone, it would again become the receptacle of the thickened lymph. You must prevent this collection from being formed. You told me that the first symptom of your illness, was a tension in the veins and fibres of your temple and eyebrow. Whenever you feel this symptom, drink water, and for some days at least resume your regimen. Your

remedy will be also a preservative. Besides, this precaution will be necessary only for a few years. When the organ is once strengthened, I shall insist upon it no longer. His prescription was exactly observed, and with all the success of which he had assured me.

This year, in which, by virtue of a few glasses of water, I had delivered myself from so great a malady, was again a magic one for me, since, by a few accidental words, I procured a great benefit for a worthy man, with whom I had no kind of connection.

The court was at Fontainebleau, and there I went pretty often in the evening, to spend an hour with Quesnai. One evening when I was with him, Madame de Pompadour sent for me and said, 'Have you heard that La Bruere has died at Rome. He had the patent of the *Mercure*, which was worth upwards of a thousand a year to him; this is enough to place more than one person in easy circumstances; we intend therefore to burden

the new patent with pensions for men of letters. You know them; name those who would need pensions, and would be willing to receive them.' I named Crebillon, d'Alembert, Boissy, and some others beside. As to Crebillon, I knew well that he stood in no need of recommendation; but seeing, when I mentioned D'Alembert, that she shewed a little displeasure, 'Madame,' said I, 'he is a mathematician of the first rank, a very eminent writer, and a most worthy man.'—'Aye,' replied she, 'but hot-headed.' I mildly answered that, 'without a little warmth, there could be no great genius.' 'He is passionately fond,' said she, 'of Italian music, and has set himself at the head of its partizans.'—'Yet,' answered I, modestly, 'he has not the less written the preface to the *Encyclopedie*.' She said no more, but he received no pension. A more serious cause of exclusion was, I believe, his zealous attachment to the king of Prussia, for whom Madame de Pompadour

entertained a personal aversion. When we came to Boissy,* she asked, 'Is Boissy not rich? I should conceive him to be at least in easy circumstances: I have seen him at the play, and always very well dressed?'—'No, Madam, he is poor, but he conceals his poverty.'—She then urged his having written so many plays. 'Yes,' said I, 'but these have not been all equally successful; and, in the meantime, he had himself and family to subsist. In short, Madam, since I must tell all, Boissy is so wretchedly poor, that had not a friend found out his situation, he would last winter have died of hunger. Wanting bread, and too proud to ask it, he had shut himself up with his wife and son, who were all resolved to perish together, and by their own hands, had not this kind friend forced open the door and saved them.'—'Good God,' cried Madame de Pompadour, 'you make me shudder. I will instantly recommend him to the king.'

* See note (3) at the end

Next morning, when I was at home appears Boissy, pale, and all in disorder, with an expression resembling joy upon the countenance of grief. The first thing he did, was to fall down at my feet. I thought he had been taken ill, and hastened to succour him. I raised him up, and asked what could have thrown him into such a condition. 'Ah, sir,' said he, 'do you not know? You who are my generous benefactor, who have saved my life, and have raised me from an abyss of misery, into a situation of unhoped-for ease and fortune! I came to ask a moderate pension upon the Mercury, and M. de S^t. Florentin informs me, that the king has bestowed on me the patent itself. He told me I was indebted for it to Madame de Pompadour; I went to return her my thanks; and then I learned from Quesnai, that it is all owing to the way in which you spoke of me, which affected Madame de Pompadour so much, that she had tears in her eyes.

I was going to interrupt him with an embrace, but he went on, 'What can I have done, sir, that you should regard me with so tender an interest? I have seen you very seldom; you scarcely know me; yet you talk of me with all the eloquence of sentiment and friendship.' At these words he was going to kiss my hands. 'This is too much, sir,' said I, 'it is time for me to moderate this excessive gratitude; and, having allowed you to unburden your heart, I, in my turn, will explain myself. It was certainly my wish to serve you; in that respect, I did no more than justice; for, otherwise, I should have betrayed the confidence of Madame de Pompadour, who did me the honour of consulting me. The rest is wholly owing to her sensibility and goodness of heart. Allow me, then, to congratulate you on your good fortune, and let us both thank her to whom you owe it.'

As soon as Boissy left me, I went to the minister, and seeing that he received

me like one that had nothing to say, I asked 'if I had not some acknowledgement to make to him?' He said 'No;'—'If the pensions on the *Mercure* were given?' He said 'Yes.'—'If Madame de Pompadour had said nothing of me?' He assured me she had not said a word; and that if she had, he would willingly have put me on the list presented by him to the king. I was confounded, I own; for though I had not mentioned my own name at the time she consulted me, I thought myself quite sure of being among the number of those whom she would propose. I went to her house, and very luckily met in her drawing room, Madame de Marchais, to whom I related the whole of my disaster; 'Oh,' said she, 'you are surprised? For my part, I do not wonder at it in the least, it is so like her. She will have forgot you.' She immediately went into the dressing closet where Madame de Pompadour was, and presently after I heard bursts of laughter. I took this as a happy omen; and

accordingly, Madame de Pompadour, as she went to mass, could not see me without laughing a new at having forgot me. 'I guessed quite right,' said Madame de Marchais, when she saw me; 'but the mischief will be repaired. I received a pension of fifty louis upon the Mercury, and was satisfied.

I knew that if M. de Boissy conducted it himself, he would do very well; but it was necessary to maintain its reputation; and for that purpose he had neither the connections, the invention, nor the activity, of the Abbé Raynal, who, in the absence of La Bruere, conducted it, and conducted it well.

Boissy, destitute of aid, and finding nothing tolerable in the papers that were left him, wrote me a letter, which was a real signal of distress. 'In vain,' said he, 'have you procured me the Mercury; this benefit is thrown away, unless you add to it that of coming to my aid. Let it be prose or verse, as you please; any

thing will be acceptable from you. But I beseech you in the name of the friendship which I have sworn to maintain for you during the rest of my life, hasten to extricate me from my present distress.'

This letter deprived me of rest. I thought I saw the poor creature overwhelmed with ridicule; the *Mercure* losing its reputation, and his own penury appearing. I was in a fever the whole night; and, in this state of violent agitation, was first struck with the idea of writing a tale. After having spent the night without closing my eyes, revolving in my mind the subject of that which I have entitled Alcibiades, I rose, wrote it at a sitting, as fast as my pen could move, and sent it off. This tale met with unhoped-for success. I had required the author's name to be kept secret. No one knew who he could be: and at Helvetius's dinner, where the most delicate judges were assembled, I had the honour of hearing it ascribed to Voltaire or Montesquieu.

Boissy, quite delighted at the increase of sale which the *Mercure* had derived from this novelty, renewed his intreaties for some other little pieces of the same kind. I wrote for him the tale of Soliman II, then that of the Scruple, and some others beside. Such was the origin of those moral tales, which have since had such circulation in Europe. Here I was more indebted to Boissy than he had been to me. But he did not enjoy his fortune long; and after his death, when his place was to be filled up, Madame de Pompadour said to the king, 'Sire, will you not give the *Mercure* to him who has supported its reputation?' The patent was given me; and I was then obliged to quit Versailles. Yet a prospect offered, which, at the time, seemed surer and better. A kind of instinct, which has always conducted me tolerably well, prevented me from giving it the preference.

Marshal Belleisle was minister at war; his only son, the count de Gisors, the

best educated and most accomplished young man of his age, had just obtained the office of lieutenant-commandant of the carabineers, of which the count de Provence was colonel. The regiment of carabineers had a secretary attached to the commander's person, and this place was vacant. A young man, of Versailles, called Dorlif, offered himself as a candidate, and mentioned that he was my acquaintance. 'Well,' said the count de Gisors to him, 'ask M. Marmontel to call upon me: I shall be very glad to talk with him.' Dorlif's whole acquaintance with me was writing little poems, which he sometimes came and shewed me; however, I believed him to be a very good sort of lad, and accordingly gave this character of him. 'Now,' said the count de Gisors, whom I saw for the first time, 'I am going to talk to you confidentially. This young man does not suit the place; I want a man who, from the time he joins me, may become my friend; and whom I may look upon as another self. My

father-in-law, the duke de Nivernois, proposes one; but I am suspicious of the too easy manner in which great men recommend; and if you can give me a man whom you can depend upon for being such as I require, (since, added he, I dare not presume to ask yourself), I will gladly receive him from your hands.'

'A month sooner, my lord,' said I, 'I should have requested for myself the honour of being attached to you. But since the king has granted me the patent of the French Mercury, I cannot, without blameable levity, so soon break this engagement; however I shall see if, among my acquaintances, I can find a man to suit you.'

Among my acquaintances at Paris, there was a young man called Suard,* whose understanding was acute, penetrating, and correct; his character amiable, and his conversation engaging. He was very well versed in literature, talked well, wrote with the very best taste, in a pure, easy, and natural

* See note (4) at the end.

style. His sentiments were honourable, and he was particularly prudent and reserved. Upon him therefore I cast my eyes, and begged him to call upon me at Paris, where I had gone, to save him the journey. This place appeared to him, in one respect, very advantageous; but in another, full of restraint and hardship. We were then at war; Suard must have followed the count de Gisors to his campaigns; but he was naturally indolent, and would gladly have had fortune, without sacrificing to it his liberty and repose. He asked twenty-four hours to think of it. Next morning he came and told me, that he could not possibly accept this place; that it was solicited by his friend Delaire, who was recommended by the duke de Nivernois. I knew Delaire to be an intelligent and very worthy man, of a steady character, and great strictness of morals. 'Bring me your friend,' said I to Suard; 'he is sure of the place, for I will propose him.' Delaire and we agreed just to say, that my choice had

happened to be the same with that of the duke de Nivernois. M. de Gisors was delighted with this coincidence, and took Delaire into his service. 'I am just setting out,' said the gallant young man; 'the army has a chance of coming to an immediate engagement, and I wish to be present. You will come and join me as soon as possible.' Accordingly, a few days after his arrival, the battle of Crevelt took place, in which he was mortally wounded at the head of the carabineers. Delaire arrived just in time to be present at his funeral.

I asked M. de Marigny, if he thought my employment, as secretary of buildings, compatible with that of conducting the *Mercure*? He answered, that he thought it impossible to perform the duties of both. 'Then,' said I, 'will you be so good as dismiss me of your own accord, for I have not courage to make a formal demand.' He gave it; and Madame Geoffrin offered to accommodate me in her house, which I gratefully accepted,

only insisting upon being allowed to pay for my lodgings.

Here then was I, driven back by destiny into that Paris, which I had quitted with so much pleasure; here was I, more dependent than ever on that public, from which I believed myself disengaged for life. What then was become of my resolutions? I had in a convent two sisters, who were now of age to be married; my old aunts were too easy in giving credit, and ruined their trade by contracting debts, which I was annually obliged to pay; I was obliged also to provide for my own future support, for I had saved only ten thousand livres, * and had employed these in giving security for M. Odde. These causes, joined to the prospect of the French academy, which I could reach only by the path of literature, and to the attraction of that literary and philosophical society which invited me into its bosom, were the causes, and must be the excuse, of the inconstancy which led me to renounce the most agreeable,

* About 400 guineas.

the most delicious repose, and go to compile a journal at Paris, that is, to condemn myself to the labour of Sisyphus, or to that of the Danaïdes.

BOOK VI.

HAD the *Mercure* been a mere literary journal, I should, in composing it, have had only one task to perform, one route to pursue. But formed as it was, of various elements, and designed to embrace a multitude of objects, it was necessary to fulfil its destination in every respect. According to the tastes of the subscribers, it had to supply the place of a gazette to the lovers of news; to give an account of theatrical compositions to such as were curious on that subject; to give a just idea of literary productions to those who wish to acquire instruction or amusement by select reading. To the sound and reflecting part of the

public, who take an interest in the progress of the useful arts, it had to give an account of experiments and fortunate inventions; while to the lovers of the fine arts, it had to announce the new pieces, and sometimes the writings of the artists. That part of the sciences which was obvious to the senses, and which could be an object of general curiosity, was also included within its boundaries. But a local and social interest was particularly necessary for its provincial subscribers: The poet of many a little town in the kingdom expected, from time to time, to find his enigma, his madrigal, his poem, inserted: and this, though seemingly the most frivolous, was, in fact, the most lucrative part of the *Mercure*.

It would have been difficult to conceive a journal which derived its attractions from a greater variety of sources. Such was the idea which I gave in the advertisement to my first volume, published in the month of August 1758. 'Its form,' said I, 'renders it susceptible

of every thing useful and agreeable; and literature has neither flowers nor fruits with which the *Mercure* may not embellish itself. It is at once literary, civil, and political; it extracts, it collects, it announces, it embraces all the productions of genius and taste; it is a kind of rendezvous for the arts and sciences, the canal of communication between them. It is a field which may continually increase in fertility, both by careful cultivation, and by the wealth spread over it. It will consist partly of extracts, partly of original essays; the former department belongs wholly to myself; but the success of the latter must depend on the aid I receive. In the critical part, the worthy man whom I succeed, though I dare not hope to fill his place, has left me an example of precision and wisdom, of candour and politeness, which I am determined to follow. I propose to speak to men of letters, the language of truth, decency, and esteem; and my attention to point out the beauties of their works, will

justify the liberty with which I shall animadvert on their faults. I know better than any one, and blush not to own, how much a young author is to be pitied, when exposed to insult, but withheld by modesty from making a personal defence. Whoever this author may be, I shall endeavour to afford him, not a passionate vindication, but a just estimate of his merits. A piece of irony, a parody, a stroke of raillery, proves nothing, and throws no light on a subject; these sallies are sometimes amusing; nay, they are more interesting to the bulk of readers, than a just and judicious criticism; the moderate tone of reason has nothing to console envy or flatter malignity; but I have no intention to prostitute my pen to the envious and the ill-natured. To the original part of this work, I intend indeed to contribute to the utmost of my power, were it only to fill up blanks; yet I set no value on any thing I can do here; all my hope is in the friendly assistance of men of letters, and I dare trust that this hope

is well founded. If some of the most respectable have not disdained to make the *Mercure* a vehicle for the amusements of their leisure, and often even for the fruits of their serious study, at a time when the success of this journal was only of advantage to a single man, what aid may I not expect from the united talents of those who are now interested in its support? The *Mercure* is no longer a private estate; it is a public property, of which I am only the manager and cultivator.

My undertaking was thus announced; and it was well seconded. The time was favourable. A brood of young poets were beginning to try their wings. I encouraged these first flights by publishing the brilliant attempts of Malfilatre;* I thereby inspired hopes which would have been fulfilled, had he not been snatched from us by a premature death. The just praises which I bestowed on the poem of Jumonville, rekindled in the feeling and virtuous Thomas,† those great powers which had been frozen by inhuman criticism. I pre-

* See note (5). † See note (6).

sented the public with a promising specimen of a translation of the Georgics of Virgil, and will venture to say, that could that divine poem have been translated into elegant and harmonious French verse, it would have been by the Abbé Delisle. By inserting into the *Mercure* a heroic epistle of Colardeau,* I proved how nearly the style of this young poet approached in melody, purity, grace, and dignity, to the most perfect models of his art. I talked advantageously of La Harpe's heroic epistles. Lastly, alluding to the success of Lemierre's Hypermnestra, I said, 'Here then are three new poets, of very high promise; the author of Iphigenia in Tauris, from his judicious and simple mode of gradually increasing the interest of the story, and from passages whose vigour is worthy of the greatest masters. The author of Astarbé, from the animation of his poetry, from his full and harmonious versification, and from his daring conception of a character which wanted only suitable contrasts to make a great

* See note (7).

figure; and the author of Hypermnestra, from pictures of the greatest energy. The public,' added I, 'ought to protect, to encourage, to console them, under the fury of envy. The arts stand in need of the torch of criticism, and of the spur of glory. It was not from the Cid persecuted, but from the Cid triumphing over persecution, that Cinna derived its birth. Encouragement inspires little minds with negligence and presumption; but to exalted souls, to lively imaginations, in short, to great talents of every kind, the intoxication of success becomes the enthusiasm of genius. They have only one poison to dread, that which freezes them.'

While thus pleading the cause of men of letters, I failed not to qualify moderate praises with a criticism which was pretty severe, but without asperity; and, in the same tone, that one friend would assume with another. By this spirit of equity and good nature, I gained the favour of young

literary men, and had them almost all as contributors.

The tribute of the provinces was yet more abundant. It was not all precious; however, if the pieces sent me in verse and prose were defective only through negligence, or want of correctness, I took care to revise them. Nay, sometimes, when a few good lines, or even verses, occurred to me as I went on, I slipt them in without saying a word; nor did the authors ever complain of these little alterations.

In the department of arts and sciences, I had likewise many resources. Medicine at this time was agitated with the question of inoculation. The comet, foretold by Halley, and announced by Clairault, drew the eyes of astronomers. Natural philosophy furnished me with curious observations; for instance, the public thought themselves obliged to me for having acquainted them with the means of cooling liquors in summer. Chemistry brought forward a new remedy against

the bite of serpents; as well as the inestimable secret of recalling the drowned to life. Surgery communicated to me her fortunate experiments, and wonderful successes. Natural history, under the pencil of Buffon, offered me a variety of pictures, out of which to choose. Vaucanson allowed me to give the public a description of his ingenious machines; the architect Leroi, and the engraver Cochin, who had traversed, as artists, one the ruins of Greece, and the other the wonders of Italy, strove which should enrich me with the most brilliant descriptions and learned observations; and my readers were amused by extracts from their travels. Cochin, an intelligent man, whose writings were almost as pure and correct as his engravings, gave me also excellent essays upon those arts which were the objects of his study. I recollect two, which painters and sculptors cannot have forgotten; one, upon lights and shades; the other, upon the difficulties of painting and sculpture, com-

pared with each other. He dictated to me the account I gave to the public of the exhibition of pictures in 1759, one of the finest ever presented in the gallery of arts. This account was a model of sound and mild criticism; the faults were perceived and pointed out; while the beauties received their full share of praise. Without deceiving the public, we satisfied the artists.

At this very time, a new career of eloquence was opened. The academy invited young orators to employ their talents in the praise of great men. With what pleasure did I then publish, that the first who had gained the prize in this list (and that by a panegyric, worthy of its subject, upon Maurice de Saxe) was the interesting young man, whose courage I had so often rekindled, the author of the poem of Junonville. He was as much pleased with the frankness of my advice, as with the equity of my praise; he had admitted me to his most secret and intimate friendship, had made me the confident of his

thoughts, and the censor of his writings.

I had formed a connection with all the academies in the kingdom, both for arts and literature; and without mentioning their productions which they were pleased to send me, the very subjects of their prizes were interesting. The questions they proposed for discussion, displayed sound and deep views, in morals, political œconomy, and the useful arts. I was sometimes astonished at the luminous extent of these questions, which came from the provinces in every quarter; nothing appeared to me to mark more clearly the direction, the tendency, and the progress of the public mind.

Thus, while, in its light department, it still continued gay and amusing, the *Mercure* failed not to improve in usefulness, consistence, and importance. For my part, I did my best to render it at once useful and agreeable, and often slipt in a tale, into which I always endeavoured to infuse some portion of interesting

morality. The apology for the theatre, which I made in reviewing Rousseau's letter to d'Alembert upon public amusements, met with all the success which truth can have in a contest with sophistry, and which reason can have, when it brings eloquence to close combat, and crushes it.

But, as a man should never be so proudly forgetful as to be guilty of ingratitude, I will not leave you ignorant of one of the resources to which I betook myself in time of need. At Paris, the republic of letters was divided into several classes, that had little intercourse with each other. Now, I neglected none of these; little poems which were written in the *bourgeois* circles, if natural and pretty, were extremely acceptable. At the house of a jeweller in *la Place Dauphine*, I had often dined with two poets belonging to the old opera-comique, whose muse was gaiety, and who never felt such a glow of genius as when under the roof of a tavern. Their happiest

state was intoxication; but, before getting drunk, they had moments of inspiration sufficient to make one believe all that Horace has said in praise of wine. One, whose name was Galet, had the character of a profligate; I never saw him but at table, and speak of him only as connected with his friend Panard, who was a good fellow, and whom I was fond of.

This profligate, however, was so curious an original as to be worth knowing. He was a grocer in *la rue des Lombards*; but as he attended the theatre more regularly than his shop, he was ruined by the time I knew him. He was dropsical, but never abated on that account either his drinking or gaiety: he cared as little for death as for life; so that, in poverty, in captivity, on a bed of pain, nay, almost in the agonies of death, he never ceased to make sport of it all.

After his bankruptcy, he took refuge in the Temple, then an asylum for insolvent debtors; and as he daily received

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accounts from his creditors, 'Here,' said he, 'am I lodged in the chamber of accounts.' When his dropsy was about to suffocate him, the vicar of the temple came to give him extreme unction, 'Ah, reverend sir,' said he, 'you are come to clean my boots: 'tis needless; I go by water.' The same day, he wrote his friend Collé, and wishing him a good new year, in couplets, to the tune of '*Accompagné de plusieurs autres*;' he thus closed his last piece of gaiety.

De ces couplets, soyez content,
Je vous en ferois bien autant
Et plus qu'on ne compte d'apôtres;
Mais, cher Collé, voici l'instant
Où certain fossoyeur m'attend,
*Accompagné de plusieurs autres.**

Honest Panard,† as careless as his friend, as forgetful of the past, and indifferent

* You must just be satisfied with these lines; most gladly should I send you a great many more; but, my dear Collé, at this very instant, a certain ditcher, with a number of attendants, is waiting for me.

† See note (8) at the end.

about the future, bore his misfortunes rather with the thoughtlessness of a child, than with the tranquillity of a philosopher. To provide his own food, lodging, dress, was no concern of his; that care was left entirely to his friends; and he had some who were kind enough to deserve this confidence. Both in his conduct and turn of mind, he had much of the easy and simple character of La Fontaine. No man had ever less delicacy in his external appearance, yet this quality appeared in his thoughts and expression. More than once, when he was sitting at table, and the fumes of wine mounting to his head, I have seen issue, from under this heavy and thickly covered mass, extemporary couplets full of ease, delicacy, and grace. In compiling, therefore, the *Mercure* of the month, when I wanted a few well-turned verses, I went and called on my friend Panard. '*Rummage*,' said he, '*in my wig-box*.' Much need was there indeed to rummage, for here, heaped one upon another, lay scraps of paper, on which were

scrawled the verses of this agreeable poet. Seeing almost all his manuscripts spotted with wine, I reproached him on that account. 'Oh, said he, 'by all means take these; it is the stamp of genius.' So tender was his affection for wine, that he spoke of it always as the friend of his soul; and contemplating, glass in hand, the object of his adoration and delight, his emotion became often so great, that tears started into his eyes. I saw him once shed them for a very singular reason. And do not treat as a fable the following anecdote, which will finish the portrait of a complete drunkard.

Having met with him after the death of his friend Galet, I expressed to him how much I sympathised in his affliction. 'Ah sir,' said he, 'it is deep and severe indeed! A thirty years friend, with whom I used to spend my life. In our walks, at the theatre, at the tavern, we were always together. I have lost him. I shall no longer sing, no longer drink with him. He is dead. I am alone in

the world. I know not now what will become of me. As he went on with these lamentations, the honest man melted into tears, and so far nothing could be more natural. But then he added: 'He died, you know, at the Temple? I went to weep over his tomb. But, oh! sir, what a tomb! They have laid him under a waterspout; a man who, since he came to years of discretion, never tasted a drop.'

You are now going to see me live at Paris, with persons of a very different character. I should have a fine gallery of portraits to delineate, were my colouring sufficiently brilliant. But I shall, at least, attempt to sketch out a few.

I mentioned that during the lifetime of Madame de Tencin, Madame Geoffrin used to visit her, and the cunning old woman saw so clearly the motive of these visits, that she used to say to her guests, '*Do you know why Geoffrin comes here? She wishes to see how much she can pick up out of my inventory.*' The fact is,

that when she died, part of her society, and the best which remained (for Fontenelle and Montesquieu were no longer alive) went over to Madame Geoffrin; but the latter did not confine herself to this little colony. She was rich enough to make her house the rendezvous of literature and the arts; and seeing that this would afford her old age an amusing society, and a respectable character in the world, Madame Geoffrin had established at her house two weekly dinners, one on Monday for artists, another on Wednesday for men of letters. It is very remarkable, that, though this woman had no knowledge, either of the arts or of literature, and had never learned any thing thoroughly in her life, yet, when placed in the midst of these two societies, she did not seem out of place. She was even quite at ease; for she had good sense enough never to speak of any thing which she did not know very well; while, on every other subject, she gave place to persons who were better informed. She

was always politely attentive, and never seemed to tire of what she did not understand. But her great art consisted in presiding, in watching, in keeping up her authority, over two classes of men who are naturally fond of freedom. She set bounds, however, to this liberty, and by a word or a gesture, as by an invisible thread, could recal any one who attempted to escape. '*Well said indeed,*' was commonly the signal of caution which she gave her guests; and however animated a conversation at her house might be, yet whenever it passed the due limit, you might say what Virgil has said of bees;

Ili motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.

Here was a singular character, not easily discerned and described, because the colouring was faint, and much was thrown into shade; it was pretty marked too, but had none of those leading features by which a character is defined and distinguished. She was kind, with

little sensibility; beneficent, without any of the charms of benevolence; prompt in succouring the unfortunate, but without ever seeing them, lest the sight should give her uneasiness. She was a sure, faithful, and even active friend; yet she served her friends with a timid anxiety, lest her own credit and tranquillity should be endangered. Her tastes, her dress, her furniture, were simple; but this simplicity was studied; she had the most refined luxury in whatever regarded her own comfort, but none of that which is calculated only for show and vanity. Her air, her carriage, and her manner, were modest; yet with pride, and even a little vain glory at bottom. Nothing flattered her more than her intercourse with the great. She seldom visited them at their own houses; there she was not at her ease; but she had the art of drawing them to hers, by a secret and imperceptible flattery. There appeared to me to be a great deal of address in the easy, natural, half respectful, and half familiar

air, with which she received them: She was always free, and always went to the utmost boundary of respect, but never overstepped it. That she might be in favour with heaven, without breaking with the world, she had formed a kind of clandestine devotion; she went to mass, as others go to an appointment of gallantry; she had an apartment in a convent of nuns, and a seat in the Capucin church, but as mysteriously as women of gallantry in those days used to keep their *petites maisons*. Every kind of display was her aversion; her greatest care was to make no noise. She was extremely desirous of being celebrated, and of acquiring consideration in the world; but she wished it to be tranquil. Somewhat like that hypochondriac Englishman who thought himself made of glass, she shunned, like so many rocks, whatever could have exposed her to the shock of human passions. Hence her feebleness and timidity, whenever courage was required, to perform a good of-

fice. The man for whom she would willingly have opened her purse, was not equally sure that her lips would open; and for this she found out ingenious excuses. For instance, it was a maxim of hers, that whenever you hear any one in company speak ill of your friend, you should never warmly undertake his defence and make head against the slanderer; for that was a sure way to irritate the serpent, and make its poison more virulent. A man, she thought, ought to praise his friends with great moderation, and on account of their good qualities, not of their actions; for when you say of any one that he is sincere and beneficent, the rest may say to themselves, we too are beneficent and sincere.' 'But,' said she, 'if you instance any proper behaviour, any virtuous action, then every one who cannot say that he has done as much, considers this praise as a reproach, and seeks to undervalue it.' The thing she valued most in a friend, was an attentive prudence never to commit her;

as an instance of which she gave Bernard, a man whose actions and words were certainly a model of the coldest formality. 'With him,' said she, 'I can be at my ease; nobody complains of him; I never have him to defend.' This was a hint for more than one of our society, whose heads, like mine, were a little hot; and if any one whom she loved was in danger or trouble from whatever cause, whether he was to blame or not, the first thing she did was to censure him; upon which I one day took the liberty of saying to her, perhaps too warmly, that her friends should be either infallible, or always fortunate.

One of her foibles was a desire of interfering in the affairs of her friends; of being their confidant, guide, and adviser. Whoever admitted her into his secrets, and allowed her to direct, and sometimes to scold him, was sure of gratifying her in the most sensible manner. But want of deference, however respectful, instantly cooled her. A man, it is

true, who wished to conduct himself according to the rules of prudence, could not do better than take her advice. The art of living in the world, was her supreme science; her ideas upon every other subject were quite common and superficial; but, in the study of manners, in the knowledge of mankind, and particularly of the female sex, she was profoundly versant, and could give excellent lessons. If, therefore, a little self-love mingled with this desire of guiding and advising, there was also kindness, sincere friendship, and a wish to be useful.

Her understanding had received no other cultivation than that which it derived from intercourse with the world; yet it was acute, just, and penetrating. A natural taste, and good sense, enabled her, in conversation, to hit upon the word and form of expression that were suitable. She wrote with purity and simplicity, in a clear and concise style; but like a woman ill educated, and who valued herself on being so. In a charming

panegyric written upon her by your uncle, you may read of an Italian abbé who came and offered to dedicate to her an Italian and French grammar. 'Dedicate a grammar to me, sir!' said she; 'why, I do not so much as know orthography!' Nothing could be more true. Her real talent was that of telling a story well; in this, she excelled, and readily employed it; without art or pretension, however, but just to set the rest an example; for no method by which she could render her society agreeable, was ever neglected.

Of all this society, the gayest and liveliest, the man too whose gaiety was the most amusiug, was d'Alembert. After spending his morning in algebraical calculations, and in resolving problems of dynamics and astronomy, he issued from his lodgings like a scholar let loose from school, with no view but that of amusing himself; and this deep, solid, and luminous mind, took then so animated and diverting a turn, that we quite

forgot the philosopher and the learned man, and saw only the agreeable companion. This natural gaiety flowed from a pure mind, void of passion, satisfied with itself, and every day enjoying some new truth, by which his labours were crowned. Such is the exclusive privilege of the exacter sciences, which no other kind of study can fully obtain.

From a similar cause, arose the serenity of Mairan,* his sweet and smiling humour. Age had done for him what nature had done for d'Alembert. It had moderated all the emotions of his soul; and the degree of warmth which it had left him, was only the vivacity of Gascon wit, sedate and correct, of an original cast, and with an agreeable and delicate point. The philosopher of Beziers, indeed, was sometimes uneasy about what was going on in China; but when he got a letter with news of his friend Father Parennin, his eyes sparkled with joy.

* See note (5), Vol. I.

Oh, my children! what souls are those which feel no anxiety but about the motions of the ecliptic, or the manners and arts of the Chinese! no vice degrades, no regret withers, no passion saddens and torments them; they possess that liberty which is the companion of joy, and without which no gaiety was ever pure and lasting.

Marivaux,* too, would gladly have indulged this sportive humour; but there was an occupation which engrossed his mind, and clouded his face with perpetual anxiety. As his works had gained him the reputation of subtle and refined wit, he thought himself obliged to have this wit constantly, and was in a continual chace after ideas susceptible of opposition, and which could be played off against each other. He allowed that such a thing was true *to a certain degree, or in a certain point of view;* but he had always some restriction, some distinction to make, which nobody had found out but himself. This close attention was laborious to him-

* See note (5) Vol. I.

self, and often painful to others; but it produced often fortunate glimpses, and brilliant rays of light.

Yet the restlessness of his looks shewed how anxious he was, both about his past and future success. Never, I believe, was there a more delicate, more easily hurt, or more timid self-love; but as he carefully avoided wounding that of others, his own was respected; and we only regretted that he could not prevail upon himself to be easy and natural.

The ideas of Chastellux* were never sufficiently clear, but he had a great many, and a very bright light penetrated often through the thin vapour spread over his thoughts. Of all the society, he possessed the most engaging character, and the most amiable candour. Whether it was, that he doubted the correctness of his own ideas, and sought to ascertain them, or that he wished to clear them by discussion, he was fond of an argument, and willingly entered into it, but gracefully and in earnest; and as soon as

* See note (9) at the end.

truth shone before his eyes, whether it came from himself or from another, he was satisfied. No man ever employed his mind more fully, in enjoying the wit of others. When he heard a bon mot, an ingenious sally, or a good story well told, he was delighted; you saw him in an ecstacy of pleasure; and the more brilliant the conversation became, the more animated were the countenance and eyes of Chastellux; the success of every other person flattered him as much as if it had been his own.

The abbé Morellet* possessed a very rich magazine of knowledge, arranged with more order and clearness, and his conversation flowed, as it were, spontaneously, from a source of sound, pure, and profound ideas, which never dried up, yet never overflowed. At our dinners, he displayed an open disposition, a correct and steady understanding, and a heart equally sound and upright. One of his talents, and that by which he was most distinguished, was a vein of delicate

* See note (10) at the end.

irony, which, before him, was a secret possessed by Swift alone. With all this power of being satirical, had he chosen, no man was ever less so; and if he sometimes indulged in personal raillery, it was only a whip which he took into his hand to punish insolence or malignity.

The politeness of S^t. Lambert* was delicate, though a little cold; and his conversation shewed the same acute and delicate turn of mind which we discover in his writings. Though not naturally gay, he became animated by the gaiety of others; and in a philosophical or literary conversation, no one talked with sounder judgment, or more exquisite taste. This taste had been formed at the little court of Lunéville, in which he formerly lived, and whose tone he still retained.

Helvetius, wholly engrossed by his ambition for literary celebrity, came to us with his brain still smoking from his morning labour. Being desirous of writing a book which should be distinguished in his day, his first care had been to find out either

* See note (11) at the end.

some new truth which he might bring to light, or some daring and original thought which he might support. Now as, for these two thousand years, new and important truths have been exceedingly rare, he had resolved to maintain the paradox which is unfolded in his book De L'Esprit. And whether it was, that after a severe struggle, he had persuaded himself of what he wished to make others believe, or that he was still contending with his own doubts, and anxiously seeking to get the better of them, we were amused with seeing him successively bring on the carpet the questions which interested, or the difficulties which troubled his mind. After having allowed him for some time the pleasure of hearing them discussed, we prevailed upon him to let himself be carried along by the current of our conversations. He then yielded to them completely and fully, and was in this familiar intercourse as easy, as natural, as unaffectedly sincere, as in his

writings he appears systematical and sophistical. Nothing could less resemble the ingenuity of his character, and habits of life, than the studied and factitious singularity of his writings; a dissimilarity which will always be found between the conduct and opinions of those who weary themselves out in thinking strange things. The soul of Helvetius was the very reverse of his own description. There could not be a better man; liberal, generous without ostentation, and beneficent from the goodness of his heart, he took it into his head to raise a calumny against all worthy men, and himself among the rest, and would allow virtuous actions to have no other motive but self-interest; however, we distinguished between the man and his books, and loved him such as he was: and you will see how agreeable his house became for literary men.

Thomas was a man still more passionate than he for glory; but he was more in unison with himself, and expected suc-

cess only from the singular powers which he displayed in expressing his sentiments and ideas, and from that high eloquence which was sure of bestowing originality on common subjects, and of throwing new light and new splendour upon truths already known. Absorbed, indeed, in his meditations, perpetually engrossed with the means of acquiring an extensive renown, he neglected the trifling attentions and the humble merit of being agreeable in company. The gravity of his character was mild, but reserved and silent; he rarely smiled at the gaiety of conversation, and never promoted it. He seldom opened, even on subjects that were suited to him, unless in a small and intimate circle; there, only, it was, that his conversation dazzled by its lustre, and astonished by its copiousness. At dinner, he did little more than increase our number, and our regard for him was solely derived from the consideration of his literary merit, and his moral qualities. Thomas devoted himself always to virtue.

to truth, to glory, but never to the graces; and he lived in an age when, without the assistance and the favour of the graces, there could be no brilliant reputation in literature.

Having mentioned the graces, I must speak of one who possessed all their gifts in thought and expression, and was the only lady admitted by Madame Geoffrin to her literary dinner; this was Mademoiselle Lespinasse, the fair friend of d'Alembert. In her was a surprising union of propriety, of judgment, of prudence, with the liveliest fancy, the most ardent soul, the most inflammable imagination, which has existed since the days of Sappho. The fire which circulated through her veins and her nerves, and which rendered her mind so active, so brilliant, and so charming, consumed her prematurely. I shall mention hereafter the regret we felt at her loss. Here I notice only the place she held at our dinners, to which her presence gave an inexpressible interest. Whether list-

ening or speaking (and no one spoke better) she was the object of our constant attention; with no coquetry, she inspired us with an innocent desire of pleasing her; with no prudery, she let us see how far we might carry the freedom of conversation, without transgressing the bounds of propriety.

I have no intention to describe the whole circle of our guests. There were some idlers, who did little more than enjoy; well informed men too, but who were covetous of their riches, and came to reap without the trouble of sowing. This number did not certainly include the Abbé Raynal; for in the use which he made of his copious fund of information, if he ran sometimes into any excess, it was not an excess of economy. The robust vigour of his philosophy was not yet displayed; the vast mass of his knowledge was not completely formed; sagacity, correctness, precision, were still the prominent qualities of his understanding, to which he added a good-

ness of heart, and a mildness of manners, which endeared him to us all. Yet the readiness of his elocution, and the copiousness of his memory, appeared to us not sufficiently tempered. What he said, could rarely be formed into dialogue; nor was it till old age had rendered his ideas less lively and abundant, that he became acquainted with the pleasures of conversation.

I know not whether it formed part of Madame Geoffrin's plan to draw into her society the most distinguished foreigners who came to Paris, and by that means to render her house celebrated throughout all Europe; or whether this was the natural consequence of her house being embellished and rendered agreeable by the society of men of letters. Certain it is, that when a prince, a minister, a man or woman of note, arrived from a foreign country, they went to call upon Madame Geoffrin, were ambitious of being invited to one of our dinners, and took great pleasure in seeing us met at

table. It was particularly on these days that Madame Geoffrin displayed all the charms of her wit, and said, '*let us make ourselves agreeable.*' Accordingly, these dinners seldom failed to be enlivened by agreeable sallies.

Among such of these foreigners as took up their residence, or made any long stay at Paris, she selected the best informed and the most agreeable, and admitted them into the number of her guests. I shall particularly mention three, who, in the endowments of wit and knowledge, were inferior to none even of the most cultivated among Frenchmen; these were the Abbé Galiani, the Marquis de Caraccioli, since ambassador from Naples, and the Count de Creutz, the Swedish minister.

The Abbé Galiani was, in his person, the prettiest little harlequin that Italy ever produced; but, on the shoulders of this harlequin, was the head of a Machiavel. He was an epicurean philosopher; his disposition was satirical, and he had con-

sidered every thing in a ridiculous point of view; so that there was nothing, either in politics or morals, about which he had not some diverting story to tell; and these stories were always properly introduced and enlivened by some unforeseen and ingenious allusion. Conceive, along with this, the most unaffected elegance in his manner of speaking, and in his gesticulation, and you may imagine the pleasure afforded to us by the contrast between the profound sense which the story contained, and the ludicrous air of the person who told it. I do not exaggerate when I say, that we forgot every thing, and listened to him, sometimes for whole hours. But when he had acted his part, he no longer formed any part of the company; he sat dull and silent in a corner, and seemed impatiently to expect the watchword to return on the stage. In his arguments, as in his stories, there was a necessity for hearing him out. If he was interrupted at any time, 'just let me conclude,' says he,

and you will soon have full time to answer.' Then, after drawing a long circle of inductions (for such was his practice) if any one attempted to reply, you saw him mix with the crowd, and quietly make his escape.

The countenance of Caraccioli, when you first looked at it, had a thick and heavy air, with which stupidity might be painted. In order to animate his eyes, and lighten his features, it was necessary for him to speak. But then, in proportion as that lively, penetrating, and luminous intelligence, with which he was gifted, awoke, sparks of light, as it were, were seen flying out. His acuteness, gaiety, and originality of thought, his easy expression, his graceful smiles, his feeling look, then united in bestowing on ugliness itself, an agreeable and interesting character. He spoke our language ill, and with difficulty; but he was eloquent in his own; and when he was at a loss for a French word or idiom, he borrowed it from the Italian. Thus he was in every

moment enriching his language with a thousand bold and picturesque expressions which excited our envy. He accompanied them also, like the Abbé Galiani, with those Neapolitan gestures which gave such animation to his words, as to make it be said of both, that they had wit to their very fingers' ends. Both had excellent stories, which almost all contained a profound moral import. Caraccioli had studied men philosophically; but he had observed them rather as a politician and a statesman, than as a satirical moralist. He had viewed on a great scale the manners and government of nations; and if he mentioned any particular features, it was only by way of example, in support of the inferences which he had been led to form.

Besides his inexhaustible stores of knowledge, and the easy and agreeable manner in which he communicated it, we esteemed him also as being an excellent man. Not one of us would have thought of making the Abbé Galiani his

friend, but each was ambitious of the friendship of Caraccioli. I enjoyed it for a long time, and cannot well express how desirable it was.

But one of the men who loved me most, and for whom I entertained the most tender affection, was the Count de Creutz. He, too, was attached to the literary society of Madame Geoffrin; he was less eager to please, less anxious to draw attention, often thoughtful, and often absent, but the most charming of all our guests, when he opened himself to us, without reserve. On him, nature had bestowed, in the highest degree, sensibility, warmth, delicacy of taste and of moral feeling, the love of what is beautiful in every department, and the enthusiasm of genius as well as of virtue. She had granted him the power of expressing and of painting in glowing colours, every object which had struck his imagination or strongly affected his soul; never man was born a poet, if he was not. He was still young, yet his mind was enrich-

ed with a vast extent of information; he spoke the French as well as ourselves, and almost all the languages of Europe as well as his own, without reckoning the learned languages; he was conversant in every branch of ancient and modern literature; talked of chemistry as a chemist; of natural history as a disciple of Linnæus; and particularly of Sweden and Spain, as a curious observer of the properties and various productions of these climates; so that he supplied us with a source of instruction, embellished with the most brilliant eloquence.

From what I have said, you must perceive how interesting and delightful this rendezvous of literary men must have been. For my part, I kept my ground, taking care to be neither too bold nor too timid; but gay, easy, and even a little free. I had the good wishes of the whole society, and the friendship of those whom I most esteemed and loved. With regard to Madame Geoffrin, though I lodged in her house, I did not hold the

first rank in her favour; not but that she was very well pleased with my enlivening, as I pretty often did, our dinners and conversations, either by little stories, or by sallies of humour, which I suited to her taste; but, in my private conduct, I was not sufficiently complaisant in consulting her, and in following the advice she gave me; while she, on her side, was rather doubtful of my prudence, and was always afraid of my occasioning her some of those vexations, which she occasionally suffered from the imprudence of her friends. To me, therefore, she behaved with an anxious and doubtful kindness; while, in my behaviour to her, I maintained a certain degree of reserve, and though I attempted to be agreeable, would not allow myself to be governed.

However, she saw me succeed with all her society; and at her Monday's dinner, I was no less welcome than at the meeting of men of letters. The artists were fond of me, because I was at once curi-

ous and docile, and spoke to them constantly of what they knew better than I. I forgot to mention that below my apartments at Versailles, was a hall containing the pictures which were successively employed to embellish the palace, and which were almost always the productions of the great masters. I used, by way of amusement, to make it my morning walk; there I spent whole hours with honest Portail, talking to him about the genius and the manner of the different Italian schools, and upon the distinctive character of the great painters. In my walk through the gardens, I had also formed some comparative ideas of ancient and modern sculpture. These preliminary studies had qualified me to converse with our guests; I allowed them the advantage and amusement of instructing me, and they liked me for the pleasure with which I listened and received their lessons. I took care not to display before them any other literary information except such as concerned the fine arts. I had no difficulty

in perceiving that, whatever might be their natural capacity, they were almost all deficient in knowledge and cultivation. Honest Carle-Vanloo possessed, in a high degree, every talent which a painter can possess, genius excepted; but he wanted inspiration; and had made few attempts to supply this want, by those studies which exalt the soul, and which fill the imagination with great and lofty ideas. Vernet was admirable in the art of painting water, air, light, and the action of these elements; he had every model of these compositions full in his mind; beyond that, he was gay enough, but quite a common man. Soufflot was a man of sense, very judicious in his conduct, a knowing and skilful architect, but his ideas were bounded by the circumference of his compass. Boucher's imagination possessed fire, but little correctness, and still less dignity; he had not taken a good place for observing the Graces; he painted Venus and the Virgin from the nymphs behind the scenes; and his lan-

guage, as well as his pictures, partook of the character of his models, and the style of his workshop. The sculptor Lemoine was interesting from the modest simplicity with which his genius was accompanied; but he spoke little even on the art of which he was so thoroughly master; he scarcely answered to the praises that were given him: an affecting degree of timidity in a man whose look was all mind and soul. Latour possessed enthusiasm, and employed it in painting the philosophers of the day. But having confused his brain with politics and morals, and thinking himself able to talk learnedly on these subjects, he thought himself humbled when you talked to him of painting. You, my children, have a specimen of his powers in my portrait; it was a reward for the complaisance with which I listened to him regulating the destinies of Europe. With the others, I informed myself about what related to their art; and thus these dinners with

artists afforded me a good deal both of pleasure and advantage.

Among the amateurs who were present at these dinners, some were possessed of a good deal of knowledge; and with them I found no difficulty in varying the conversation, and reviving it when it was likely to languish; and they seemed very well satisfied with my mode of talking to them. One man alone shewed me no kind of good-will; and his cold politeness indicated aversion; this was the Count de Caylus.*

I cannot say which of the two had got the start of the other; but scarcely had I known the character of the man, when I conceived as much aversion for him as he had for me. I never took the trouble to examine what it was that had displeased him in me, but I knew very well what I disliked in him. It was the importance which he assumed on account of the meanest and most trifling of talents; the value which he attached to his minute researches and antique gewgaws;

* See note (12) at the end.

the kind of dominion which he had usurped over the artists; and of which he made a bad use by favouring men of middling talents who paid court to him, and by depressing those who, being more confident in their own strength, would not deign to solicit his support. In short, it was a refined and skilful vanity, a fierce and domineering pride, which he was skilful enough to conceal under a rude and simple appearance. Supple and attentive towards men in power, on whom the artists depended, he acquired with the former a credit, the influence of which was dreaded by the latter. He accosted learned men, and got them to compose memoirs upon the toys which were sold to him by his broker; he made a magnificent collection of these trifles, which he held forth as antiques; he proposed prizes upon Isis and Osiris, that he himself might seem to be initiated into their mysteries; and by this false shew of erudition he crept into the academies, though he knew neither Greek nor Latin. He had

so often said, and so often got his panegyrists to say, that in architecture he was the restorer of the simple style, of simple forms, of simple beauty, that the ignorant believed it; and through his connections with the Dilettanti, he passed himself off in Italy, and in all Europe, as the inspirer of the fine arts. For him, therefore, I felt that kind of natural antipathy which plain and honest men have always for impostors.

After dining at Madame Geoffrin's with literary men, or with artists, I spent the evening with her in a more intimate society; for she had also done me the favour of admitting me to her private supper parties. The feast was but small; commonly there was just a chicken and spinnage, with an omlet. The company was small too, and consisted at most of five or six particular friends, or three or four men and women of the highest fashion, suited to each other's taste, and all of whom were pleased to be together. But of whatever persons this small circle

of guests consisted, Bernard and I were always in the number. There was only one from which Bernard was excluded, and I only admitted. The group consisted of three women and one man. The three women, who resembled a good deal the three goddesses of mount Ida, were the beautiful Countess of Brionne, the beautiful Marchioness de Duras, and the handsome Countess d'Egmont. Their Paris was Prince Louis de Rohan. But I suspect that at this time he gave the apple to Minerva, for the lively and seducing d'Egmont appeared to me the Venus of the supper. She was the daughter of Marshal Richelieu, and had the vivacity, the wit, and the graces of her father. She was also said to have his roving and libertine humour; but of this neither Madame Geoffrin nor I chose to appear conscious. The young Marchioness de Duras was as modest as Madame d'Egmont was lively; and her dignified severity, with a style of beauty in which there was nothing elegant nor winning,

suggested the idea of Juno. As to the Countess de Brionne, she would have been Venus herself, had it been sufficient to possess the most elegant form, the most perfect regularity of features, and to unite every thing which a man could conceive in order to describe or paint ideal beauty. Of all charms, she wanted one only, without which there can be no Venus in the world, and which rendered Madame d'Egmont so captivating; this was the air of voluptuousness. As to the Prince de Rohan, he was young, brisk, wild, good-humoured, haughty occasionally when he met with men whose dignity rivalled his own, but gaily familiar with men of letters who, like me, were easy and simple.

At these private suppers, my vanity, as you may well suppose, excited me to use every means which I possessed, of being agreeable and amusing. The new tales which I was then writing were first read before these ladies, and they amused themselves, either before or after supper,

with hearing them read. They appointed meetings for this purpose; and when, from any accident, the private supper did not hold, they met at dinner at Madame de Brionne's. I must confess myself never to have been more sensibly flattered by any success than by that which my reading met with in this little circle, where I was judged, or rather applauded, by wit, taste, beauty, and all the graces united. Neither in my descriptions, nor in my dialogue, was there a stroke at all delicate or refined, which was not strongly felt; and the pleasure I caused resembled transport. I myself was transported to see, close by me, the finest eyes in the world shedding tears at those little affecting scenes in which I painted the sufferings of nature or love. But notwithstanding their extreme politeness, I clearly perceived too, the cold and feeble passages which were passed over in silence, and those in which I had missed the proper word, the language of nature, the precise shade of truth; and

all this I marked to be corrected at leisure.

From the idea which I have given of Madame Geoffrin's society, you will doubtless suppose that it might have supplied the place of every other. But I had old and worthy friends in Paris, who were very glad to see me, and with whom I was myself very happy to meet. Madame Harenc, Madame Desfourniels, Mademoiselle Clairon, and in particular Madame d'Herouville, had a right to share my most agreeable moments. I had formed also some new friends, whose society was charming. The intendants *des menus plaisirs* were not neglected.

I had observed besides, that it was necessary for a man, who wished to acquire his true value in Madame Geoffrin's eyes, to preserve a certain medium between negligence and assiduity, to leave no room for her either to complain of the one, or be tired of the other, not to be deficient in the attentions which he paid her, but also not to be too lavish. Too eager

attention oppressed her. Even of the most agreeable society, she wished to take only what suited her, at her own time and convenience. I therefore imperceptibly secured the advantage of being able to make some sacrifices to her; and talking of the life which I led in the world, I gave her, without affectation, to understand that the time I was with her might have been spent very agreeably elsewhere. Accordingly, for the space of ten years, during which I lodged in her house, though I never inspired her with a very tender friendship, I never lost her esteem and kindness; and until she was seized with her paralytic stroke, I never ceased to be one of those literary men whom she entertained and befriended.

Yet to conceal nothing, Madame Geoffrin's society wanted one of the pleasures on which I set the greatest value, and that was freedom of thought. With her mild, *well said indeed,* she kept our minds always, as it were, in leading strings; and

I received dinners elsewhere, where we were more at our ease.

The freest, or rather the most licentious of all, was that given by a wealthy farmer-general, of the name of Pelletier, to eight or ten bachelors, who were all fond of gaiety. At this dinner, the wildest heads were Collé, and Crebillon the younger. They were constantly playing upon each other in the most entertaining manner; but woe to him who entered the lists. There never was any personal satire; literary vanity was alone attacked, but it was not spared: and it was necessary to throw it off completely before engaging in the combat. Collé was brilliant beyond all expression; and his adversary Crebillon had a particular address in animating and exciting him. Sometimes, tired of being an idle spectator, I threw myself into the circle at my own risk, and received lessons of modesty that were a little severe. Sometimes, too, one Monticourt entered into the contest, an expert and delicate humourist, and

what was then called a banterer of the first rank. But the literary vanity which he diverted himself with attacking, gave us no hold on him: for, by acknowledging himself to be devoid of talents, he became invulnerable to criticism. I used to compare him to a cat, which, lying on its back with its paws in the air, shews nothing but claws. The rest of the company laughed at our contest, and this pleasure they were allowed to enjoy; but when gaiety ceased to be satirical, and laid aside the arms of criticism, every one was eager to take his part. Bernard alone (for he too was present at these dinners) kept always aloof.

There is something very singular in the contrast between the character and reputation of Bernard. The nature of his poetry might, in his youth, have enabled him to deserve the appellation of *Gentil*, but he was not in the least *gentil* when I knew him. With women, he had only an obsolete gallantry; and when he had said to one lady that she was as fresh

as Hebé, or that she had the complexion of Flora, to another that she had the smile of the Graces, or the figure of the Nymphs, he had no more to say. I saw him at Choisy at the festival of roses, which he celebrated annually in a kind of small temple, decorated with opera-scenes, and adorned with so many garlands of roses that our heads were affected by them. This festival was a supper in which the ladies were imagined to be all the divinities of Spring. Bernard was the high-priest. This surely was for him the moment of inspiration, had he been at all susceptible of it: well, even there, no sally, in the least animated, either of gaiety or of gallantry, ever escaped his lips; he was just coldly polite. With literary men, amid their most brilliant gaiety, he was still only polite; and in our serious and philosophical conversations, nothing could be more barren. He had but a superficial knowledge even of polite literature, and knew only his Ovid. Being thus reduced almost to si-

lence upon every subject which went beyond the sphere of his ideas, he never had an opinion of his own, and nobody ever could say what Bernard had thought upon any subject of the least consequence. He lived, if one may say so, on the reputation of his amatory poems, which he was prudent enough not to publish. We had foreseen their fate when they should be printed: we knew that they were frigid, a fault particularly unpardonable in a poem on the art of love; but his reserve, his modesty, his politeness, inspired us with so much good will, that not one of us, during the lifetime of Bernard, ever disclosed the fatal secret. I return to the dinner where Collé displayed a character so different from that of Bernard.

Never was the genius of gaiety of so rich and constant a warmth; I cannot now say what it was we laughed at so much, but I know well that every sally of his made us laugh till the tears came into our eyes. Every thing became humorous and diverting by passing through

his brain when once it was heated. It is true, he often sinned against decency, but at this dinner there was no excessive severity upon that head.

A very curious accident broke up this joyous society. Pelletier fell in love with an adventurer, who made him believe that she was daughter to Louis XV. Every Sunday she went to Versailles, under pretence of visiting her royal sisters, and she always came back with some little present, a ring, a case, a watch, a box with a portrait of one of these ladies. Pelletier, who had wit, but a very weak understanding, believed all this, and in deep mystery, married this gypsey. From that time you may well suppose that we could no longer find any pleasure in his house; and he himself, having soon after discovered his error, and the shameful folly of which he had been guilty, turned mad, and died at Charenton.

A more decent and more agreeable liberty, a gaiety not so wild, but yet abundantly

lively, reigned at the suppers of Madame Filleul, where the young Countess de Seran shone in all the lustre of rising beauty and artless gaiety. At these suppers, no one thought of aiming at wit; this was the least anxiety both of the landlady and her guests, and yet there was a great deal, of the most natural and delicate kind. But before describing the pleasures of this society, I must mention one which soon after cost me too dear to escape from my memory. Listen, my children, to that chain of circumstances, accidentally combined, which led to one of the most remarkable events of my life.

In the society of Madame Filleul, I again met with Cury; I formerly mentioned that he shewed me much kindness during his prosperity; and very lately he had invited me to spend with him and his intimate friends some of the fine days at his country house of Chenevière, near Andresis, where he had accommodation for shooting. There, in view of a picturesque cottage, I had composed the

tale of the Shepherdess of the Alps. This was a happy moment of calm and serenity, soon followed by a violent storm. Every one hunted, except myself: but I observed the chace, as it went on in an island of the Seine. Here I sat at the foot of a willow, and fancying myself on the Alps, I composed my tale, and watched the dinner of the hunters. When they returned, the fresh and pure air of the river had supplied the place of exercise, and made my appetite as keen as theirs.

In the evening, a table, covered with the game which they had killed, and crowned with bottles of excellent wine, opened the field, as it were, to gaiety and freedom. These were the last caresses, the deceitful adieus, which faithless prosperity bestowed on Cury.

Hinc apicem rapax
Fortuna cum stridore acuto
Sustulit.

He had made the gentlemen of the bed-chamber his enemies, by a little piece of gaiety in which he had indulged at

the theatre of Fontainbleau, where, in a prologue, after his manner, he had turned them into ridicule. After pretending themselves to laugh at his humour, they revenged it by forcing him to quit his office of intendant *des menus plaisirs*. Of these gentlemen, the most foolish, vain, and passionate, was the Duke d'Aumont. He had been bent on the ruin of Cury, was the principal cause of it, and valued himself on being so. That alone would have given me an aversion to this pitiful duke. But I was personally injured by him, in the following manner.

Madame de Pompadour had expressed a desire that the Venceslaus of Rotrou should be purified from that grossness of manners and language, which deformed that tragedy; and, out of complaisance to her, I had agreed to undertake this ungrateful labour. The actors themselves had heard and approved my corrections; and the tragedy had been got by heart and rehearsed with these alterations, for the purpose of being acted at Versailles.

But Le Kain, who detested me, for a reason I have mentioned elsewhere, after pretending to adopt the corrections of his character, had been so treacherous as, without my knowledge, to restore the old character exactly as it was, which had confused all the other actors, and produced every moment a failure in the replies of the dialogue, and in all the effect of the representation. I had loudly complained of this, as an instance of unheard-of baseness and insolence; and finding myself committed in the disputes which this event excited among the actors, I was proceeding in the *Mercure* to inform the public of Le Kain's conduct, and give the lie to the reports which were circulated by his party, when the Duke d'Aumont, by whom it was favoured, had made silence be imposed upon me. I too therefore had some reason not to like him.

Cury, notwithstanding his misfortune, had still kept up a friendly intercourse with his old companions in the *menus*

plaisirs. One of them, with whom I was particularly intimate, Gagny, an amateur of painting and of French music, and one of the most faithful attendants on the opera, had taken for his mistress a girl who wished to act on that theatre; and he was desirous that she should make her appearance in the great characters of Lully, beginning with that of Oriana. He invited Cury, myself, and some other *amateurs*, to spend the Christmas holidays at his country house at Garges, where we might hear the new Oriana, and give her a few lessons. You must observe that in this party of pleasure was Laferté, intendant *des menus*, and the fair Rosetti, his mistress. Good entertainment, good wine, and the kindness of our host, made Mademoiselle Saint Hilaire's voice appear admirable. Gagny thought he heard Le Maure; and after drinking some of his wine, we were all of his opinion.

Every thing was going on as well as possible, when one morning I learned that Cury was seized with a violent fit of

the gout. I went immediately and called upon him. I found him by the fire-side, having both his legs covered with flannel; he was scrawling however on his knee, and laughing with the air of a Satyr, for he had all the features of that animal. I was going to talk to him of his fit of the gout; he made me a sign not to interrupt him, and with a crippled hand continued to write. I then said to him, 'You have suffered a great deal, but your illness I see is abated.'—'I am still in pain,' said he, 'but that does not hinder me from laughing. You shall laugh too. You know the rage with which the Duke d'Aumont has persecuted me. A little piece of satire will not, I think, be too severe a revenge; and here is one, which in spite of the gout I have composed to-night.'

He had already written thirty lines of the famous parody of Cinna; he read them; and I must confess that, as they appeared to me very diverting, I urged him to go on. 'Well,' said he, 'allow

me to compose, for my genius inspires me.' I left him, and did not come down till the sound of the dinner bell, when I found that he himself, wrapt in flannel had hobbled down, and was reading to Laferté and Rosetti what he had read to me in the morning. He had now written some additional lines; and on hearing them read a second time, I easily got by heart the whole of these satirical verses assisted by my perfect knowledge of those of Corneille, which they were intended to parody. Next day, Cury went on with his work, and always made me his confidant; so that, on my return to Paris, I carried away about fifty lines well stored in my memory.

I am aware that, in its passage through the world, the ball has been swelled, but this I think is all that came from the hand of Cury. I must add, that in his lines there was not the least abuse; whereas I have seen some of the grossest in the numerous incorrect copies which have been taken.

Those who made these copies had got hold of the general idea of the parody, but almost all the particulars were altered and disfigured. There were even passages which, not being formed upon the lines of Corneille, had been absolutely forgotten by the copiers. For instance, in counterfeiting that manner of giving his opinion, which had procured for d'Argental the name of *Gobe-Mouche*, they had strung together a number of unmeaning words; but these broken words contained no delicate strokes, not a feature of resemblance with the passage in the parody, where d'Argental thus pronounces his opinion:

Oui, je serois d'avis...cependant il me semble
Que l'on peut...car enfin vous devez...mais je tremble.
Ce n'est pas qu'après tout, comme vous sentez bien,
Je ne fusse tenté de ne menager rien;
Mon froid enthousiasme est fait pour les extremes.
Mais les comediens, les poetes eux memes...

Je ne sais que vous dire, et crois, en attendant,
Que le plus sur parti seroit le plus prudent.
C'est la seule raison qui fait que je balance,
Seigneur, et vous savez combien mon excellence
Delibere et consulte avant de decider.
Sans doute mieux que moi le Kain peut vous guider;
A sa subtilité je sais que rien n'echappe:
Il a pu vous convaincre, et moi-meme il me frappe.
Toute fois je pretends qu'il est de certains cas
Où souvent...on croit voir ce qu'on ne voit pas.
Tel est mon sentiment, seigneur, je le hasarde
*Jugez vous, c'est vous seul que l'affaire regarde.**

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* Yes, I should think...yet it appears to me that one may...for, in short, you ought...but I tremble. Not that, after all, as you may suppose, I did not feel a temptation to throw off all reserve; my cool enthusiasm naturally leads to extremes. But the actors, the poets themselves...I know not what to say, but I think, in the meantime, that the surest line of conduct would be the most prudent. This, sir, is the only reason which makes me hesitate; and you know how long My Excellence deliberates and consults before determining. Doubtless Le Kain will be a better guide than I; he may have convinced you, and he has struck myself. Nevertheless, I

This was the very style and manner of Cury's raillery. All his acquaintances knew it as well as myself. When the duke d'Aumont said to his confidants,

Et par vos seuls avis je serai cet hiver
Ou directeur de troupe, ou simple duc et pair.†

When he replied to d'Argental in admiration of his eloquence,

Vous ne savez que dire! ah! c'est en dire assez.
Vous en dites toujours plus que vous ne pensez.‡

I cannot conceive how those who were every day hearing Cury's jests did not recognize his delicate irony. In his

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insist, that there are certain occasions when a man thinks he sees what he does not see. Such, sir, is my opinion; I will venture to express it. Do you judge; the affair concerns you alone.

† Your opinion alone shall decide, whether I shall this winter be the manager of a stage, or merely a duke and peer.

‡ You know not what to say! indeed, that is saying enough. You say always more than you think.

youth, this turn of mind displayed itself on a remarkable and well-known occasion.

His mother was intimately acquainted with M. Poultier, intendant of Lyons. One day when she and her son were at a grand dinner at his house, the latter, sitting by the intendant's lady, and the mother by the intendant himself, M. Poultier had drawn the eyes of the company upon a snuff-box of his, which had not been yet seen, and said that it was a present from one who was very dear to him.

*Madame, est-ce la votre, ou celle de ma mere.**

asked young Cury, addressing himself to the intendant's lady. One of the guests, wishing to display his erudition, observed that this verse was from Rodogune. 'No,' replied M. Poultier, 'it is from *l'Etourdi.*' There was a great deal of wit

* Madam, is it from you, or is it from my mother?

in this mode of checking a piece of folly and impertinence.

This sally, and a number of others, had rendered Cury celebrated for his power of delicate allusion. Luckily it was forgotten.

I arrived at Paris, and went to Madame Geoffrin's, full of the parody which he had communicated to me; and on the following day, I heard this curious piece talked of. Only the two first lines were quoted,

Que chacun se retire, et qu'aucun n'entre ici;
Vous, le Kain, demeurez; vous, d'Argental, aussi.†

but this was enough to make me believe that it was in general circulation, and, smiling, I unguardedly said, 'What! do you know no more than this?' Presently I am urged to repeat all I know. They

† Let every person withdraw, and let no one be admitted. Le Kain, do you stay; and you also, d'Argental.

assured me there were none there but men of honour, on whom I could depend; and Madame Geoffrin herself engaged for the discretion of this little circle of friends. I yielded; I repeated to them what I knew of the parody; and next day I was denounced to the Duke d'Aumont, and by him to the king, as the author of this satire.

I was sitting quietly at the opera, hearing our Oriana at the rehearsal of Amadis, when I was told that all Versailles was on fire against me; that I was accused of being the author of a satire against the Duke d'Aumont; that the high nobility were calling out for vengeance, and that the Duke de Choiseul was at the head of my enemies.

I returned home immediately, and wrote to the Duke d'Aumont, assuring him that I was not the author of the verses ascribed to me, and that, never having written a satire against any one, I would not have begun with him. I ought to have stopped here. But as I wrote on,

it occurred to my recollection, that on the subject of Venceslaus, and of the lies published against me, the Duke d'Aumont had himself written to me that I ought to despise such things, and that they sunk of themselves into oblivion, when nothing was done to buoy them up. It appeared just and natural to repay him with his own maxim, which was very foolish in me. Accordingly, my letter was considered as a new insult, and the Duke d'Aumont shewed it to the king as a proof of the resentment which had dictated my satire. To throw ridicule upon him in my very disavowal, amounted nearly to an acknowledgment of guilt. My letter therefore only added new fuel to his rage, and that of the whole court. I failed not to go to Versailles, and, on my arrival, wrote to the Duke de Choiseul.

MY LORD,

I am told that you lend an ear to the report which accuses, and tends to ruin me. You are powerful, but you are just; I am unfortunate, but I am innocent. I beseech you to listen and judge me.

I am, &c.

The duke de Choiseul, in reply, wrote at the foot of my letter, *in half an hour*, and returned it to me. In half an hour I went to his hotel, and was introduced.

'You wish me to hear you,' said he, 'and I agree. What have you to say?' —'That I have done nothing, my lord duke, which deserves the severe reception I meet with from you, whose soul is noble and feeling, and who never took pleasure in humbling the unhappy.'—'But, Marmontel, how would you have me to receive you, after the very blameable satire which you have composed against the duke d'Aumont?'—'I did not compose that satire; I wrote to himself to that effect.' —'Yet, in your letter, you have offered a new insult, by retorting, in his own language, the advice he had given you.' —'As this advice was prudent, I thought there could be no harm in calling it to his recollection. I meant no ill.'—'Yet, allow me to say you have committed a piece of impertinence.'—'I was sensible

of it [illegible]er my letter went off.'—'He is very much irritated, and with good reason.'—'Yes, here I was wrong, and I reproach myself as guilty of a breach of propriety. But, my lord, can you consider this as a crime?—'No; but the parody?—'I assure you, as an honest man, that the parody is not mine.'—'But are not you the person who repeated it?'—'Yes, that part which I knew, in a society where every one says all he knows; but I allowed no copies to be taken, though there were some who would gladly have written it out.'—'Yet it is in circulation.'—'It must have been got from some body else?'—'Well, from whom did you get it?' (I kept silence.) 'You,' continued he, 'are said to have been the first who repeated it, and repeated it in a manner which discovered you to be the author.'—'When I repeated that part which I knew,' replied I, 'it was already talked of, and the first lines were quoted. As to the manner in which I repeated it, this would equally prove

me to have written the Misanthrope, the Tartuffe, and Cinna itself; for I value myself, my lord duke, upon reading all these, as if I were the author.'—' But, after all, from whom did you get the parody? You must tell that'—Forgive me, my lord duke, that I must not, and will not tell.'—' I am certain it must have been from the author.'—' Well, my lord duke, if it were from the author, ought I to give his name?'—' But how otherwise would you have us believe that it is not yours? All appearances are against you. You cherished resentment against the duke d'Aumont; the cause is well known; you were desirous of revenge. You wrote this satire, and as it appeared diverting, you repeated it: this is what people say, what they believe, and what they have a right to believe. What do you say in answer to this?'—' I say that this would be the conduct of a fool, of an idiot, of a man as weak as he was wicked, and that none of these characters belong to the author of the

par[illegible]. What, my lord duke, could the man who had written it have been so imprudent, so stupidly blind, as to go himself and repeat it in a public company? No, he would, in a disguised hand, have written out twelve copies, and have sent them to the actors, to the guards, to discontented authors. I know as well as another this mode of keeping secresy, and had I been guilty, I would have employed it to conceal myself. Just say then to yourself,—Marmontel, in the presence of ten persons who were not his intimate friends, has repeated what he knew of this parody, therefore he is not the author. His letter to the duke d'Aumont, is that of a man who fears nothing; therefore, he felt himself strong in his innocence, and thought he had nothing to fear. This reasoning, my lord duke, is the reverse of that which is held by my opponents, but it is not the less conclusive. I have done two imprudent things; one is the repeating verses which my memory had caught, and that

without the consent of the author.' 'It was by the author, then, that you heard them repeated?' 'Yes, by the author himself, for I will not deceive you. I have therefore failed in my duty to him, which is my first fault: the other consisted in writing to the duke d'Aumont in a manner which had an ironical and disrespectful appearance. I own myself to have been wrong in these two particulars, but in no others.'—'I believe it,' said he, 'you speak like an honest man; however, you must go to the Bastile. Call on M. de Saint Florentin, he has received the order from the king.'—'I go,' said I, 'but may I hope that you will no longer be among the number of my enemies.' He promised this with a good grace, and I went to call on the minister who was to expedite my *lettre de cachet*.

He was well disposed towards me, and easily believed my innocence. 'But what can be done,' said he, 'the duke d'Aumont accuses you, and insists on your being punished? He asks this fa-

vour in return for his own services, and those of his ancestors. The king has chosen to grant it. Go to M. de Sartine; I sent him the king's order. You will tell him that you come for it at my desire.' I asked if I could first be allowed time to dine at Paris.

I was invited to dine this day with my neighbour, M. de Vaudesir, a prudent and intelligent man, who, though his appearance was rather forbidding, possessed exquisite taste in literature, with very polite and amiable manners. Alas! his only son was the wretched Saint James, who, after madly squandering a large fortune that had been left him, died a bankrupt in that Bastile to which I was now sent.

After dinner, I acquainted Vaudesir with my adventure, and we took a tender leave of each other. I then went to M. de Sartine, but did not find him at home; he was dining that day in the city, and was not expected till six. It was five; I spent the interval in calling on my good

friend Madame Harenc, informing her of my misfortune, and soothing her anxiety. At six, I returned to the minister of police. He either knew not, or pretended not to know my affair; I gave him an account of it, and he expressed regret. 'When we dined together,' said he, 'with the Baron d'Holbach, who would have thought that the first time I should meet you again, would be to send you to the Bastile? But I have not got the order. Let me see if it has not come to the office in my absence. He sent for his clerks; and on their declaring that they had heard nothing of it, 'Go,' said he, 'sleep at home; and if you return to-morrow at ten, it will do just as well.' I had need of this evening to arrange the *Mercure* for the month. I therefore sent and begged two of my friends to sup with me, and in the meantime called on Madame Geoffrin, and informed her of my disgrace. She had heard something of it already, for I found her cold and sad; but though my misfortune took its

rise in her society, and though she herself was the involuntary cause, I took no notice of that circumstance; with which, I believe, she was very well pleased.

The two friends whom I expected, were Suard and Coste; the former was a young Toulousan, with whom I had become acquainted in that city; the other was, and I trusted would continue for life to be, the chosen friend of my heart. He was pleased to cherish this agreeable illusion, by frankly presenting me with opportunities of being useful to him. I should have been offended, had he appeared to question the full right which he had to command my services. A desire of employing them usefully for themselves, had led me to undertake a collection of the most curious articles in the old *Mercures*. They amused themselves with making the selection, and a hundred and twenty guineas, the produce of this part of my domain, were divided between them.

We spent part of the night together, in making all the preparations for printing the next *Mercure*, and after having slept a few hours, I arose, packed up my clothes, and went to M. de Sartine's, where I found the officer who was to accompany me. M. de Sartine proposed that this person should go to the Bastile in a different carriage from mine. But I chose to decline this obliging offer, and my conductor and I arrived at the Bastile in the same carriage. I was received in the council chamber by the governor and his staff-officers; and there I began to perceive, that I had been well recommended. The governor, M. Abadie, after reading the letters that were given him by the officer, said, that if I chose, I might retain my servant; on condition, however, that we should lodge in the same room, and that he should not leave the prison before me. This domestic was Bury. I consulted him on the subject; he answered, that he would not leave me. My clothes and books were slightly examined,

and I was taken up to a very large room, the furniture of which consisted of two beds, two tables, a chest of drawers, and three chairs of straw. It was cold; but a jailor kindled a good fire, and brought plenty of wood. At the same time, I was supplied with pens, ink, and paper, on condition that I should give an account, both of the number of sheets I received, and of the manner in which they were employed.

Whilst I was arranging my table, before sitting down to write, the jailor returned, and asked if I was satisfied with my bed. After examining it, I answered, that the mattresses were bad, and the blankets dirty. These were all changed in a minute. I was also asked at what hour I would choose to dine. I answered, 'at the common hour.' There was a library in the Bastile, and the governor sent me the catalogue, and desired me to make my choice out of the books which it contained. I merely thanked him for myself, but my servant asked

for Prevost's novels, which were brought him.

I had in my possession sufficient means of warding off ennui. I had been long fretted at the contempt which literary men expressed for the poem of Lucan, which they had not read, and knew only by the barbarous and bombastical version of Brebuf. I had resolved to make a more decent and correct translation into prose; and as this task would employ my mind, without fatiguing it, it appeared the most suitable for the solitary leisure of my prison. I had therefore brought the Pharsalia with me; and with a view of understanding it better, I had taken care to add the Commentaries of Cæsar.

Here then was I, by the side of a good fire, revolving the quarrel of Cæsar and Pompey, and forgetting my own with the duke d'Aumont. Bury, on the other hand, was as much of a philosopher as myself, and amused himself with making our beds, which were placed in the two opposite corners of my room. Notwith-

standing two strong bars placed on the window, we were then enlightened by a fine winter day, and had a view of the suburbs of S^t. Antony. Two hours after, I was drawn from this deep reverie by the noise made in undrawing the bolts from the two doors which inclosed me; and a couple of jailors, loaded with a dinner, which I supposed to be mine, came in, and set it down, without saying a word. One placed before the fire three little plates covered with dishes of common earthen ware; another spread upon the vacant table a cloth, which, though somewhat coarse, was white. The table was then very neatly covered with pewter fork and spoon, good household bread, and a bottle of wine. Having performed their office, the jailors retired, and the two gates were shut with the same noise of locks and bolts. Bury then invited me to sit down to table, and served me with soup. It was Friday; the soup-meagre was made of white beans and fresh butter, and a dish of the same beans was the first

which Bury served. All this was very good. Still better was the cod which he brought for my second course. A little seasoning of garlic gave it a delicacy of taste and odour which might have gratified the palate of the most voluptuous Gascon. The wine, though not excellent, was tolerable. There was no desert: one could not but expect to want something. Upon the whole, it appeared to me that a man dined very well in prison.

As I was rising from table, and as Bury was going to sit down, (for there remained still enough for his dinner), my two jailors again appeared with pyramids of new plates in their hands. The appearance of fine linens, beautiful earthen ware, silver fork and spoon, shewed us our mistake; but we said nothing; and when the jailors, after setting it all down, had withdrawn, Bury said, 'Sir, you have eaten my dinner; allow me, if you please, to eat yours.' —'It is quite fair you should,' replied I; and the walls of my room were, I believe, much surprised to echo a laugh.

This dinner was rich, consisting of the following dishes: an excellent soup, a slice of juicy beef, the leg of a boiled capon swimming in gravy, a small dish of artichokes fried in marinade, a dish of spinage, a very fine Cresanne pear, fresh grapes, a bottle of old Burgundy, and some of the best Mocha coffee. Such was Bury's dinner, with the exception of the coffee and fruit, which he made a point of reserving for me.

After dinner, the governor called upon me, and asked if I had found my dinner good, assuring me that it should be from his own table; that he himself would take care to cut every slice, and that no other person should touch them. He proposed a chicken for supper; I returned thanks, but said that the fruit which remained from dinner would suffice. You have seen what my ordinary fare at the Bastile was, and may infer from it in how mildly, or rather how reluctantly, they submitted to become subservient to the rage of the Duke d'Aumont.

I daily received a visit from the governor. As he had some knowledge of belles lettres, and even of Latin, he took pleasure in observing the progress of my composition; he enjoyed it. But he soon broke off from these little amusements, and said, 'Adieu; I must go and comfort those who are more unhappy than you.' It was very possible that the attentions which he paid to me might not be a proof of his humanity; but of his possessing that virtue, I had certain evidence from other quarters. One of the jailors had formed a friendship with my servant, and had soon become familiar with me. One day, when I was talking to him of the feeling and compassionate character of M. Abadie, he said, 'Oh! he is the best of men; this place is painful to him; and he accepted it only with the view of alleviating the condition of the prisoners. He succeeded a severe and avaricious man, who treated them exceedingly ill; accordingly, when he died, and the present governor succeeded, the

change was felt in the very dungeons; you would have said, (a very strange expression in the mouth of a jailor), that a sunbeam had penetrated into these dungeons. Men, to whom we are forbid to mention what passes without, asked of us what had happened. In short, sir, you see how your servant lives; almost all our prisoners live equally well; M. Abadie feels himself relieved by every relief which it is in his power to give them, for he suffers in seeing them suffer.'

The manner in which I was treated at the Bastile, gave me reason to think that my residence there would not be long; and my composition, enlivened with agreeable reading, (for I had Montaigne, Horace, and La Bruyere, with me), left me little time to tire. There was only one thing which sometimes made me melancholy: the walls of my room were covered with inscriptions, all expressive of the sad and gloomy reflections which had doubtless oppressed the

unhappy men by whom this prison had been formerly occupied. I thought I still saw them wandering and lamenting, and their shades surrounding me.

But my thoughts were much more cruelly tormented by a subject which personally concerned me. In describing the society of Madame Harenc, I did not mention an honest fellow called Durant, who entertained a friendship for me, but who was not otherwise remarkable, except for his great simplicity of manners.

Now, one morning, on the ninth day of my captivity, the major of the Bastile entered my room with a grave and cold air, and, without any preamble, asked if I was acquainted with a person of the name of Durant? I answered in the affirmative. He then took up the pen, sat down, and continued his examination. The age, the size, the figure of this Durant, his profession, his residence, the time and the house at which I had become acquainted with him; were all in-

quired into: and the major wrote down each of my replies with a countenance of marble. Lastly, he read over my deposition, and presented me with a pen to sign it. I signed it accordingly; after which he withdrew.

Scarce had he left the room, when my imagination was seized with all the most gloomy presages. What then can honest Durant have done? He goes every morning to the coffee-house; he will have undertaken my defence; he will have murmured loudly against that partial, unjust, and oppressive authority, which overwhelms the weak and innocent, out of complaisance to the man in power. In consequence of this imprudent way of talking, he himself will have been arrested; and thus, on my account, and out of his love for me, he will be doomed to an imprisonment more rigorous than mine. And as he is weak, much younger, and more timid than I, he will be seized with vexation, and will sink under it; thus I shall be the cause of his death. And as for

poor Madame Harenc, and all our good friends, in what a situation must they be? O God! how many misfortunes will my imprudence have caused! Thus a man, imprisoned and solitary, in the chains of absolute power, exaggerates in thought every sinister presage, and wraps his soul in gloomy ideas. From this moment, I never enjoyed another sound sleep. All the dishes which the governor so carefully put aside for me, were steeped in bitterness. I felt my heart struck, as it were, with a mortal blow; and if my confinement in the Bastile had continued eight days longer, it would have been my tomb.

In this situation, I received a letter, which was forwarded to me by M. de Sartine. It was from Mademoiselle S**, an interesting and beautiful young lady, with whom, before my disgrace, I was on the eve of being united. In this letter she expressed in the most affecting manner the sincere and tender interest which she felt in my misfortune, but assured me that

her courage did not sink under it; and that her affection, far from being abated, was become only warmer and more constant.

I began my answer with expressing how sensible I was to so generous a friendship. But I added, that misfortune had taught me a great lesson, which was, never to associate any one in the unforeseen dangers and sudden revolutions to which I was exposed, by the perilous condition of a man of letters; that, in my present circumstances, if I felt any degree of courage, it was owing to my situation as an insulated being; that my head would already have turned, had I left without the walls of my prison a wife and children plunged in grief; and that, on this side at least, which to me would be the most sensible, I was resolved that adversity should have no hold of me.

Mademoiselle S** was more mortified than grieved by my reply; and she soon after comforted herself by marrying M. S**.

At last, on the eleventh day of my imprisonment, about sunset, the governor came and informed me that I was again at liberty; and the same officer, who had conducted me hither, escorted me back to M. de Sartine. This magistrate expressed some joy at seeing me, but his joy was mingled with sadness. 'Sir,' said I, 'I feel extremely grateful for your kindness, yet there is something in your manner which still afflicts me: while you congratulate, you look as if you pitied me. Can you have any other misfortune to announce?' (I was thinking of Durant.)— 'Yes indeed,' said he; and have you no suspicion of what it may be? the king has deprived you of the *Mercure*.' These words were a relief to me; and bowing my head, in sign of resignation, I replied, 'So much the worse for the *Mercure*.'— 'The evil,' added he, 'is perhaps not without remedy. M. de Saint-Florentin is at Paris; he takes an interest in you; call upon him to-morrow.'

After leaving M. de Sartine, I run to Madame Harenc's house, impatient to see Durant. I found him, and, amid the acclammations of joy raised by the whole company, I saw him alone. 'Ah, is it you?' said I, throwing myself on his neck: 'what a relief to me!' The whole company were astonished by this transport at the sight of a man for whom I had never entertained any passionate attachment. They thought the Bastile had disordered my brain. 'Ah, my friend,' said Madame Harenc, embracing me, 'you are free! how happy I am! But the *Mercure?*'—'The *Mercure* is lost,' said I. But, madam, allow me to inquire about this unhappy man. What can he have done to occasion me so much grief?' I related the story of the major. It appeared that Durant had gone to M. de Sartine, had asked permission to see me, and had called himself my friend. M. de Sartine had desired that I should be asked who this Durant was; and instead of this plain question, the major

had made an examination. Having my doubts cleared up, and my mind at ease upon this point, I employed my courage in reviving the hopes of my friends; and after receiving from them a thousand grateful marks of the most tender interest, I went and called on Madame Geoffrin.

'Oh, very well, so you are there,' said she; 'God be thanked! but the king deprives you of the *Mercure*. The Duke d'Aumont is quite happy; this will teach you to write letters'—'And to repeat verses,' added I, smiling. She asked if I was not going to commit some new piece of folly? 'No, madam; but I am going, if possible, to remedy those I have committed.' As she was really grieved at my misfortune, she found it necessary to comfort herself by giving me a scold. 'Why had I written these lines?'—'I did not write them,' said I.—'Why then did you repeat them?'—'I repeated them at your request.'—'And, pray, did I know that they contained so bitter a satire?

Ought you, who knew it, to have boasted of your knowledge? how impertinent! And then your good friends De Presle and Vaudesir go about publishing that you went to the Bastile on your parole, and were treated with every kind of attention and forbearance.'—'What, madam, should I have let it be supposed that I was dragged like a criminal.'—'You should have been silent, and not have braved people of their rank. Marshal Richelieu has not failed to observe, that he was twice conducted to the Bastile like a criminal, and that it was very singular that you should be better treated than he.'—'Truly, madam, I am an object worthy of Marshal Richelieu's envy.'—'Yes indeed, sir; they are hurt at the indulgence shewn to the man who offends them, and they employ all their credit in order to obtain revenge: it is natural they should.'—'Poor creatures,' exclaimed I, with rather a contemptuous look; but as I soon perceived that my replies made her angry, I determined to keep silence. At last, when she

had unburdened her heart, I rose with a modest air, and bade her good 'evening.

'Next morning, I had scarcely awoke, when Bury came into my room, and announced Madame Geoffrin. 'Well, sir,' asked she, 'how have you spent the night?'—'Very well, madam; my sleep was interrupted neither by the undrawing of bolts, nor by the call of the sentinels.'—'Well,' said she, 'I never shut an eye.'—'How so? madam.'—'How? do you not know? I had been unjust and cruel. Yesterday evening I overwhelmed you with reproaches. See what sort of creatures we are; the moment a man is unfortunate we reproach him; we make every thing he does a crime. (Here she began to weep).—'Good God! madam,' said I, 'can you still be thinking of that? I, for my part, had quite forgot it; or remember it only as an expression of your kindness. Every one loves in his own way; yours is to scold your friends for the mischief they have done to them-

selves, as a mother scolds her child when it falls.' She was relieved by these words; and asked what I intended to do. 'I intend,' said I, 'to follow the advice given me by M. de Sartine; to call upon M. de Saint-Florentin; then to go to Versailles, and, if possible, to procure access to Madame de Pompadour and the Duke de Choiseul. But I am quite cool, and in full possession of my senses; I shall behave well, so you need not be at all uneasy.' Such was this conversation; which does, I think, as much honour to Madame Geoffrin's character, as any of the good actions of her life.

M. de Saint-Florentin appeared affected by my misfortune. He had done every thing for me which his weakness and timidity admitted of; but he was seconded neither by Madame de Pompadour, nor the Duke de Choiseul. He did not explain himself, but approved of my calling on them both; and I went to Versailles. Madame de Pompadour, on whom I first called, desired Quesnai to tell me, that

in the present state of things she could not see me. I was not surprised; I had no right to expect that she should raise to herself powerful enemies on my account.

The Duke de Choiseul admitted me; but immediately began to load me with reproaches. 'I am extremely sorry,' said he, 'to see you again in misfortune; but you have really done every thing in your power to bring it on yourself; and your offences have been so aggravated by imprudence, that those who were most inclined to serve you, have been under the necessity of abandoning you.'—'And pray, my lord duke, what have I done? What was it possible for me to do, within the four walls of a prison, which could add another offence to those of which you have heard me accused?'—'In the first place,' replied he, 'the very day you were to go to the Bastile, you went to the opera, and boasted, with an insulting air, that your being sent to the Bastile was a mere feint, an empty show of com-

plaisance towards a duke and peer, against whom you had never ceased to harangue in the green-room; against whom you wrote the most injurious letters to the army; against whom, in short, you wrote the parody of Cinna; not alone, indeed, but at a supper in Mademoiselle Clairon's, in company with the Count de Valbelle, the Abbé Galiani, and other joyous guests. You told me nothing of all this, and yet I am assured it is perfectly true.'

During the time he spoke I was recollecting myself; and after he had done, I began my answer. 'My lord duke,' said I, 'your kindness is dear to me; your esteem is still more precious than your kindness; yet I consent to lose both your kindness and esteem, if in all these stories which you have heard there be a word of truth.'—'How,' cried he, shrugging his shoulders, 'not a word of truth in what I have just said?'—'Not a word; and I beg you will allow me to sign my

name upon your bureau to every successive article of what I am going to reply.

'The day that I was to go to the Bastile, I certainly had no sort of inclination to go to the opera.' I then gave him an account of the manner in which I had spent my time after leaving him: 'Send,' added I, 'to M. de Sartine, and Madame Harenc, and ascertain the time which I spent with them; it was precisely the opera hours.

'As to the green room, it luckily happens that, for six months, I never set foot within it. The last time I was seen there, (and I am quite certain as to the date), was at the first appearance of Duranci. Even before that time, I defy them to produce any improper expressions in which I ever indulged against the Duke d'Aumont.

'It happens no less luckily, my lord duke, that since the opening of the campaign, I have not written to the army; and if you can shew me a letter, or even a note, which any one there has received

from me, I am willing to forfeit my character.

'With respect to the parody; it is utterly false, that it was written at supper, or in the company of Mademoiselle Clairon. I declare even that I never heard a single line of it in her house; and if afterwards, when it became known, it was the subject of conversation there, as is very possible, it was at least not in my presence.

'Here, my lord duke, are four assertions, which, if you will allow me, I will write down and sign upon your bureau; and be assured, that no man alive will prove the contrary, or will dare to maintain it to my face in your presence.'

You may well suppose that, as the Duke de Choiseul listened to me, his passion was a little cooled. 'Marmontel,' said he, 'I see that I have been imposed upon. You talk in a manner which leaves no room to doubt of your sincerity; truth alone would dare to hold such language. But you must put it in my power to af-

firm that the parody is not yours. Say who is the author, and you have the *Mercure* again.'—'Never, my lord duke, will I purchase the *Mercure* at such a price.' —'How so?'—'Because I prefer your esteem to twelve thousand livres a year.'— 'Upon my word,' said he, 'since the author is so unhandsome as not to declare himself, I do not see why you should spare him.'—'Why, my lord duke? because, after having made a rash use of his confidence, it would be the height of baseness to betray it. I have been imprudent, but will not be treacherous. He did not entrust me with his verses for the purpose of publishing them. My memory stole them from him; and if the theft was deserving of punishment, it [illegible] ought [illegible] Heaven forbid he should declare himself, or ever be discovered! Then indeed I should be unhappy, I should have caused his misfortune, and should die of grief. But as it is, where lies my crime? I have done what nobody makes any secret of doing. And

allow me, my lord duke, to ask yourself, if, in company, you never repeated an epigram or satirical poem which you had heard? Who, before me, was ever punished on that account? The *Philippiques* you know was an infernal work. The regent, the second man in the kingdom, was calumniated in a shocking manner; yet this infamous work went from hand to hand; it was written out; there were a thousand copies taken; yet who but the author was punished? I knew some lines, I repeated them, allowing nobody to take copies; and the whole crime of these lines consists in ridiculing the vanity of the Duke d'Aumont. Such, in two words, is the state of the case. Had he been accused of some murderous conspiracy, you would be right in compelling me to declare the author. But being a mere piece of pleasantry, it would be not worth loading myself with the infamous character of an informer; and though not my fortune only, but my life

were in danger, I would still say with Nicomedes;

Le maitre qui prit soin de former ma jeunesse,
*Ne m'a jamais appris a faire une bassesse.**

I perceived that the Duke de Choiseul thought my little pride somewhat ridiculous; and to let me see it, he asked, smiling, who had been my Hannibal? 'My Hannibal,' replied I, 'my lord duke, is misfortune, which has long tried and taught me to suffer.'

'Now this,' replied he, 'is what I call an honest man.' Seeing him at length shaken, I said, 'it is this honest man who is ruined and crushed, out of complaisance to the Duke d'Aumont, with no other motive besides his accusation, no proof but his bare assertion. What shocking tyranny!' Here the Duke de Choiseul stopped me. 'Marmontel,' said he, 'the pa-

* The master who instructed my youth never taught me to be guilty of meanness.

tent of the *Mercure* was a favour from the king; he withdrew it at pleasure: there is no tyranny there.'—'My lord duke,' replied I, 'so far as the king is concerned, the patent of the *Mercure* is a favour; but between the Duke d'Aumont and myself, the *Mercure* is my property, of which he has no right to deprive me by a false accusation. But it is not I whom he plunders; it is not I who am sacrificed. His vengeance is glutted by the sacrifice of more innocent victims. Know, my lord duke, that having lost my father at the age of sixteen, and seeing myself surrounded by a poor and numerous family of orphans like myself, I promised to be a father to them all. I called upon heaven and nature to witness my vow, and from that time to this, I have sacredly fulfilled it. My own subsistence costs little, I can reduce both my wants and my expence still lower. But what is to become of that crowd of unfortunate beings, whose subsistence depended on the fruit

of my industry; of two sisters, whose marriage portions I was to provide; of old women, whose age required a little comfort; of the sister of my mother, a widow, poor and burdened with children. I had flattered them with the hope of being placed in easy circumstances, they began already to feel the effects of my fortune; the benefits derived from it were no longer likely to be withdrawn; but all of a sudden they are to hear! . . . Ah, there it is, that the Duke d'Aumont should go and taste the fruits of his vengeance; there it is, that he will hear cries, and see tears flow. Let him go there, and count the number of his victims; let him drink up the tears of childhood and age; let him insult the objects whom he has deprived of bread; there it is, that his triumph awaits him. He asked it, I am told, as the reward of his services; it is a reward indeed, which is worthy of his heart.' At these words my tears flowed, and the duke de Choiseul, as much affected as myself,

embraced me, and said, 'My dear Marmontel, you move me to the very soul; I have done you perhaps a great deal of injury, but I will now repair it.'

With his usual vivacity; he then took up the pen and wrote to the Abbe Barthelemi: 'My dear Abbé, the king has granted you the patent of the *Mercure*; but I have just seen and heard Marmontel; he has affected me, has convinced me of his innocence; it would be unworthy of you to accept the spoils of an innocent man. Refuse the *Mercure*, and depend upon being no loser.' He wrote to M. de Saint-Florentin: 'My dear sir, you have received an order from the king to make out the patent of the *Mercure*; but I have seen Marmontel, and must talk to you about him. Do nothing hastily, till we have conversed together.' He read these notes, sealed and sent them off. He then desired me to call upon Madame de Pompadour, to whom he gave me a note, which he did not read, but which was extremely favourable; for I

was introduced the moment she cast her eyes on it.

Madame de Pompadour was indisposed, and kept her bed. I approached, and had at first the same reproaches to encounter from her as from the Duke de Choiseul. I answered them in the same manner, and with still greater mildness. 'Such, then,' said I, 'are the new offences which are alleged against me, in order to prevail upon the king, after imprisoning me for eleven days, to extend his severity so far as to pronounce my ruin. Had I been at liberty, perhaps, madam, I should at least have made my way into your presence; I should have proved the falsehood of these accusations, and by confessing to you my real and only fault, I should have obtained your forgiveness. But my enemies begin by getting me inclosed within four walls; they took advantage of the period of my captivity, to calumniate me at leisure, and with impunity; and the gates of my prison are opened only to shew me the abyss

which they have dug under my feet. But it is not enough to drag myself and my unfortunate family into this abyss; they are aware, that an aiding hand may still draw us out; they dread, lest this hand which has already loaded us with so many favours, should again become our support; they deprive us of this last and only hope, and because the Duke d'Aumont's pride is wounded, a crowd of innocent persons must be deprived of all consolation. Yes, madam, such has been the object of those lies which prepossessed you against me, by leading you to consider me either as a wicked man or as a fool. This, more than any other, is the tender part by which my enemies have contrived to pierce my heart.

'At present, in order to deprive me of all power of defending myself, they call upon me to name the author of that parody, of which I have repeated a few lines. They know my character so well, madam, as to be quite sure that I will never name him. But they assert, that

by not accusing him, I condemn myself: so that, if I will not be infamous, I am undone. Certainly, if my safety can be purchased only at this price, my ruin is fully decided. But when, madam, did honesty become a crime? when did it become necessary for the accused to prove his innocence? and when was the accuser exempted from the obligation of bringing proof? yet I will repel by proofs, an attack which is supported by none. These proofs are my writings, my character which is sufficiently known, and the whole course of my life. Since I was so unfortunate as to be numbered among literary men, all the satirical writers have been my enemies. There is no kind of insolence which I have not received, and patiently endured. Now, let them produce out of my writings, an epigram, a bitter attack, a satire, in short, any thing at all resembling the present, and I am willing that it should be ascribed to me. But if I have disdained such mean vengeance, if my pen, always decent and

moderate, has never been dipped in gall, why should it be believed, upon the bare assertion of a man blinded by rage, that this pen has begun with distilling its venom upon him. I am calumniated, madam, before you and before that good king, who cannot believe himself to be imposed upon; and were it not for the generous pity with which I have inspired the Duke de Choiseul, neither the king nor yourself would ever have known that I was calumniated.'

Scarce had I ended, when the Duke Choiseul was announced. He had no time, for I had left him dr... 'Well, madam,' said he, 'you have ... Marmontel; what do you think ... injury done him?'—'I think, sir,' ... she, 'that it is horrible; and tha... *Mercure* must be restored to hi... 'Such is my opinion,' said the du... 'But,' replied she, 'there would be a... propriety in the king appearing to chang... entirely in the course of a day: there is a step which must be taken by the Duke

d'Aumont himself.'—'Ah, madam,' exclaimed I, 'you pronounce my doom; he will never take such a step as you desire.' —'He shall do it,' said she: 'M. de Saint Florentin is with the king, he is coming to see me, and I will speak to him. Go and wait for him at his house.'

The old minister was not better pleased than myself, with the turn which the weakness of Madame de Pompadour had taken, nor did he conceal how bad an omen he thought it. In fact, the [illegible]inate pride of the Duke d'Aumont [illegible]quite insuperable. Neither his friend [illegible]ount d'Angiviller, nor his physician [illegible]rt, nor his companion the Duke de [illegible], could inspire him with the least [illegible]y of sentiment. As there was no[illegible] in himself which could procure re[illegible] he was at least determined to make [illegible]lf feared; and he returned to court, determined not to yield; declaring, that he would regard, as enemies, all those who should propose to him taking any step in my favour. Nobody dared

to make head against one of the men who were nearest the person of the king; and all the great interest that was taken in my fortune, ended in allowing me an annuity of a hundred and twenty guineas upon the *Mercure*. The Abbe Barthelemi refused the patent; and it was granted to a person of the name of Lagarde, Madame de Pompadour's librarian, and the worthy favourite of Colin, her man of business.

Ten years after, the Duke de Choiseul, happening to dine with me, put me in mind of our conversations, and said that he would have wished there had been some witnesses to them. My memory, long since become faint, has enabled me to give only a very slight sketch of them. But the situation must have powerfully inspired me; for he added, that he never in his life had heard a man so eloquent as I was at that moment. Talking on this subject, he said, do you know what hindered Madame de Pompadour from making the *Mercure* be restored to you?

It was that scoundrel Colin, wishing to give it to his friend Lagarde. This Lagarde was so infamous, that in the society *des menus plaisirs*, in which he was endured, he went by the name of Lagarde-Bicêtre.* It was to Lagarde-Bicêtre then, my children, that I was sacrificed.

This new editor, being equally destitute of information and talents, did his duty so ill, that the *Mercure* lost its credit and sale, and was likely to be no more in a condition to pay the annuities with which it was burdened. The terrified annuitants came, and besought me to resume it. But after once throwing off this irksome chain, I was resolved not to be entangled any longer; luckily Lagarde died, when the *Mercure* was executed not quite so ill, and its dissolution became slower. But in order to preserve the annuities, it became necessary at last to make it a bookseller's concern.

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* The Bicêtre is one of the prisons of Paris.

BOOK VII.

My adventure with the Duke d'Aumont was of great use to me in two respects; it led me to give up a project of marriage too hastily formed, and of which there is reason to believe I should afterwards have had cause to repent: and it sowed in the mind of Bouvart the seeds of that friendship which was afterwards so useful to me. But these were not the only good offices which the Duke d'Aumont did me by his persecution.

In the first place, my soul, which had been too much softened by the delights of Paris, of Avenay, of Passy, and of Versailles, stood in need of adversity to restore the firmness and tone which it had

lost: the Duke d'Aumont had taken care to restore the ancient vigour and courage of my character. In the second place, the *Mercure*, though it did not employ me very seriously, failed not to engross my attention, to waste my time, and to interrupt other pursuits to which I should have been inclined. It was a bar to every enterprize which could have been honourable to my talents, while it subjected them to a minute and almost mechanical drudgery. The Duke d'Aumont had set them at liberty, and had placed me under the fortunate necessity of putting them to a worthy and dignified use. Lastly, I had determined to devote to the composition of the *Mercure* eight or ten of the best years of my life, in hopes of amassing a hundred thousand livres,* which formed the boundary of my ambition. Now the leisure procured me by the Duke d'Aumont produced almost as much in the same number of years, with-

*, About £4000.

out at all encroaching upon the pleasures of my society in town, and of the delicious rural retreats, in which I passed the fine season of the year.

I have not mentioned the advantage of being received into the French academy sooner than I should have been, had I composed nothing but the *Mercure*. The Duke d'Aumont certainly had no intention to lead me thither by the hand; yet he did so without design, and even while endeavouring to prevent it.

I have observed more than once, and in the most critical events of my life, that when fortune appeared to thwart me, her arrangements were more favourable than the gratification of my own wishes could have been. Here was I ruined; and yet, my children, you will see, from amid my ruin, a happiness arise, as uniform, as peaceful, and as seldom interrupted, as a man of my profession can hope to enjoy. In order to establish it upon its solid and natural foundation, that is to say, upon tranquillity of mind, I be-

gan with freeing myself from domestic anxiety. Age or disease, that particularly which seemed to be hereditary in my family, successively thinned the number of those worthy relations whom it gave me so much pleasure to place in easy circumstances. I had already prevailed upon my aunts to give over every kind of trade; and after paying off our debts, had given annuities in addition to the revenue arising from my little property. Now that these pensions, of a hundred crowns * each, were reduced to the number of five, there remained for myself [illegible] my annuity of [illegible] thousand crowns upon the *Mercure*. I had besides five hundred livres,† the interest of [illegible] thousand,‡ which I had employed in giving surety for M. Odde. Besides this, there was an annuity of five hundred and forty livres,‖ upon the Duke of Orleans; and

* £12:10.
† About 20 guineas.
‡ About 400 guineas.
‖ About £22.

the balance which remained, after closing the accounts for the *Mercure*, enabled me to purchase some stock. For the maintenance, therefore, of my servant and myself, I had an income of nearly a thousand crowns; * now I never had spent more. Madame Geoffrin even proposed that the payment of my rent should be henceforth dropped; but I begged her to allow me to try yet another year, whether my means would not be sufficient, and assured her, that if it straitened me, I would not blush to own it. I was not reduced to this extremity. Most unhappily, the number of pensions which I paid, was reduced by the death of my two sisters, who were in the convent at Clermont, and were carried off by the same disease which had proved fatal to our father and mother. Shortly after, I lost my two old aunts, who alone continued to stay in the house. Death left me only the sister of

* £125.

my mother, the aunt d'Albois, who is still alive. I thus came every year to the use of some of my own benefactions. The first editions of my tales formed another source which began to enrich me.

My mind being at ease with respect to fortune, the French academy formed my sole ambition; and even this ambition was quiet and moderate. Before reaching my fortieth year, I had three years more to devote to study; and in three years I should possess additional claims to this appointment. My translation of Lucan was going on; I was at the same time preparing materials for my Art of Poetry; and the celebrity of my tales continued to increase with every new edition. My future prospects therefore seemed every way agreeable.

You recollect the obliging and friendly manner in which Bouret had begun his acquaintance with me. When it was [illegible]ce formed, I had been admitted to all [illegible]is societies. In one of my tales, I have drawn the character of the most intimate

of his female friends, the beautiful Madame Gaulard. One of her two sons, an agreeable man, held the employment of receiver-general at Bordeaux: he had taken a journey to Paris; and, on the evening before his departure, being one of the finest days of the year, we were dining together at our friend Bouret's, with a large and splendid company. The magnificence of this house, and the embellishments which it derived from the fine arts, his sumptuous table, the opening verdure of the gardens, the serenity of a clear sky, and still more the agreeable manners of a landlord, who, when surrounded by his guests, seemed to be the lover of every woman, and the best friend of every man; in short, every thing which can spread good humour through an entertainment, had united to [illegible]en our minds. Feeling myself the [illegible]est and most independent of men, I was like a bird escaped from its cage, leaping with joy through the air; and to conceal nothing, the excellent wine we

were drinking contributed not a little to give wing to my thoughts.

Amid this gaiety, the youngest son of Madame Gaulard was taking leave of us; and talking of Bordeaux, he asked if there was any thing in which he could be useful to me. 'In giving me a good reception,' said I, 'when I shall visit that opulent city and its noble harbour; for among my reveries of the future, this is one of the most interesting.'—'Had I known that,' said he, 'you could have accomplished it to-morrow. I could have offered you a place in my carriage.'—'And I,' said one of the company, (a Jew of the name of Gradis, one of the richest merchants in Bordeaux), 'could have undertaken to transport your baggage.'—'My baggage,' said I, 'would not have been burdensome; but my return to Paris...'—'In six weeks,' replied Gaulard, 'I would have escorted you back.'—'Suppose then,' said I, 'all this is now impossible.'—'Quite possible,' said they, 'so far as regards us; but we set out to-

morrow.' I then whispered a few words to the faithful Bury, who waited at table, and sent him to pack up my clothes; then drinking to the health of my travelling companions, 'Here,' said I, 'am I ready; we set out to-morrow.' The whole company applauded so prompt a resolution, and drank to the travellers' health.

It is difficult to conceive a more agreeable journey. The road was magnificent, and the weather so mild and beautiful, that even in the night-time we drove and slept with the glasses down. The directors and receivers of the revenue received us everywhere with the most eager attention. I thought myself transported to those poetical ages and those beautiful climates, which were so famed for splendid hospitality.

At Bordeaux, I was received and treated in the best possible manner: that is to say, I had good dinners, excellent wine, and even salutes from the vessels which I visited. But though this city contained men of wit, who could make

themselves extremely agreeable, I enjoyed their society less than I could have wished. They were possessed with a fatal rage for playing at dice, which darkened their mind, and engrossed their soul. I was daily grieved to see some one agonized by the loss which he had suffered. They seemed to dine and sup together only with a view of falling upon each other as soon as they rose from table; and there appeared to me something monstrous in this mixture of fierce avidity with social enjoyments and affections.

No society could be more dangerous than this, for a receiver-general of the revenue. However untouched he might have the public money, the mere responsibility of his character should be a prohibition against all games of chance, as exposing to shipwreck, if not his fidelity, at least the confidence reposed in him. I was of some use to Gaulard in confirming his resolution of never allowing himself to be seduced by the contagion of example.

There was another cause which impaired the pleasure of my residence at Bordeaux. The maritime war had inflicted a deep wound on the commerce of this great city. I saw only its ruins in the beautiful canal which was before my eyes. But I could easily form an idea of what it must be in its peaceful and prosperous condition.

Some mercantile houses, where there was no play, were those which I frequented most, and found most agreeable. But none attracted me so strongly as that of Ainsly. This merchant was an English philosopher, whose character inspired veneration. His son, though still very young, gave the promise of an excellent man: and his two daughters, though not beautiful, had an unaffected charm of mind and manner, which appeared to me even more engaging than beauty. Jenny, the youngest of the two, had made a strong impression on my soul. I composed for her the romance of *Petrarque*, and sung it as I bade her adieu.

During the leisure which was afforded me by the society of a city, in which every one spent the morning in business, I resumed my taste for poetry, and composed my address to the poets. I was amused also by the little humorous pieces which were then printing at Paris, against a man who deserved to be punished for his insolence, but whose punishment was certainly very rigorous: this was Le Franc de Pompignan.*

His literary merit, though considerable in his province, was at Paris very moderate, yet still sufficient to procure esteem; and this esteem he might peaceably have enjoyed, had he not been so intoxicated by the excess of his vanity and presumptuous ambition. Unhappily he was too much flattered in his academies of Montauban and Toulouse. There he was accustomed to hear himself applauded whenever he opened his mouth, nay, even before he had spoken; he was extolled in the journals, whose favour he contrived to gain or purchase, so that he

* See note (13) at the end.

thought himself a man of importance in literature; and unfortunately too, he combined with the arrogance of a parish lord, the pride of a president of the upper court in his city of Montauban; which produced a character every way ridiculous. In consequence of the opinion which he entertained of himself, it had appeared to him unjust that, at the moment he expressed a desire to be a member of the French academy, he had not been received with open arms; and in 1758, when Sainte-Palaye had obtained a preference over him, he expressed a lofty resentment. Two years after, the academy bestowed its votes upon him; and the unanimity of the election ought to have flattered him extremely. But instead of the modesty which was affected even by the greatest men, at least on their entrance, he displayed the irritation of offended pride, with an inconceivable excess of pride and asperity. The poor man had formed the ambition of holding some office or other in the education of

the royal family. He knew that the dauphin did not like Voltaire's religious principles, and viewed the *Encyclopedie* with an unfavourable eye; he paid his court to that prince, and hoped to recommend himself by his Sacred Odes, the magnificent edition of which ruined his bookseller. The shewing him his translation of the Georgics would, he thought, be flattering to his vanity. But he did not know with whom his own vanity had to do; he knew not that when the dauphin himself read this translation, so laboriously hammered out into harsh and rugged lines, quite devoid of colouring and harmony, and compared it with the masterpiece of Latin poetry, he viewed it with the eye of satirical criticism, and turned it into derision. His discourse on being received into the French academy, appeared to him to afford an opportunity of striking a party blow, by publicly attacking that class of literary men who were called philosophers, particularly Voltaire, and the writers of the *Encyclopedie*.

He had just made this sally when I set out for Bordeaux; and the success which he met with was almost as astonishing as his arrogance. The academy had listened in silence to this insolent harangue; the public had applauded it. Pompignan came forth triumphant, and puffed up with vain glory.

It was not long, however, before the *facetiæ Parisienne* * began a light skirmish against him; and I learned from one of his own friends, President Barbeau, who called upon me, that 'all Paris was laughing at poor Pompignan.' He shewed me the first sheets which had just come to his hands; they were the *quand* and the *pourquoi*. I saw the turn that the pleasantry was taking. 'So you are the friend of M. le Franc,' said I.—'Alas,' said he, 'I am.'—'Then I am sorry for you, for I see the laughers at his heels. Here are the *quand* and the *pourquoi*; the *si*, the *mais*, the *car*, will

* See note (14) at the end.

not be long of following; and rest assured, that your friend will not be dismissed till he has gone through the whole round of the particles The correction was still more severe than I had foreseen; he was ridiculed in every possible way. He attempted to defend himself seriously; this made him only the more ridiculous. He addressed a memorial to the king, which was contemptuously thrown aside. Voltaire, in laughing at his expence, seemed to renew his youth; both in verse and prose, his satire was more gay, more lively, more rich in amusing and original ideas, than it had ever been. No interval elapsed between one sally and another. The public never ceased to laugh at poor Le Franc's expence. He was under the necessity of shutting himself up in his own house, that he might not hear the song made upon himself sung in company, and see himself pointed at with the finger; at last, he went and buried himself in his castle, where he died, without ever daring to make his appearance again

at the academy. I felt, I confess, no pity for him; not only because he was the aggressor, but because his aggression had been deep and serious; and such as, had it been listened to, tended to no less than to proscribe a number of literary men, whom he publicly accused as the enemies of the throne and of the altar.

When Gaulard and I were on the eve of returning to Paris, he said to me, 'Why should we return by the same road? would you not rather like to make a tour by Toulouse, Montpellier, Nismes, Avignon, Vaucluse, Aix, Marseilles, Toulon, and then by Lyons and Geneva, where we should see Voltaire, who was an acquaintance of my father.' You may well suppose that I embraced with transport this most agreeable scheme, and, before setting out, I wrote to Voltaire.

At Toulouse, we were received by an intimate friend of Madame Gaulard, M. de Saint-Amant, a man who possessed all the frankness and politeness of old

times, and who held a very good employment in the city. For my part, I no longer found it to contain any of my acquaintances; I had even some difficulty in recognizing the city, so much was it diminished in my eyes, by the habit of seeing Paris, and the greater objects with which I compared it.

From Toulouse to Beziers, we were employed in observing the canal of Languedoc. It was indeed an object which raised my admiration, because I saw the union of grandeur and simplicity, two characters which never appear together without causing astonishment.

The junction of the two seas, and the communication between them, were the result of two or three great ideas combined together by genius. The first was that of forming a huge collection of water in that species of cup, which is formed by the mountains on the side of Revel, some leagues from Cacasson, so as to be the perpetual source and reservoir of the canal. The second was the selection

of an eminence, lower than the reservoir, yet commanding, on one side, the interval between that point and Toulouse, and, on the other side, the interval between the same point and Beziers; so that the waters of the reservoir, being conducted thither by a natural slope, might be kept suspended in a vast level, and by merely extending, on one side, toward Beziers, and on the other, towards Toulouse, might supply the canal, and transport the vessels, on one side, into the Orbe, and, on the other, into the Garonne. A third, and leading idea, had then been, to form locks on every spot where the vessels would have occasion to rise or descend; which, as is well known, were filled and emptied at pleasure, so as to receive the vessels; thus answering the purpose of ladders, by which these might rise or descend, in both directions, to the level of the canal.

I will not trouble you with all the measures which were adopted by the foresight and industry of the inventor, in

order to furnish the canal with an inexhaustible supply of water, and to regulate its quantity without ever making it to depend on the course of the neighbouring rivers, or to have any communication with them; I shall only say, that I overlooked none of these particulars. But the chief object of my attention was the bason de Saint-Ferreal, the reservoir of the waters of the canal. This bason, formed, as I have described, by a circle of mountains, is 2,222 fathoms in circumference, and 160 feet in breadth. The narrow pass of the surrounding mountains is closed by a wall 36 fathoms thick. When it is full, the waters burst forth into cascades; but in times of drought, these overflowings cease, and the supply is then drawn from the bottom of the reservoir in the following manner. In the thickness of the dike, two vaults are formed, at the distance of forty feet, and are extended under the reservoir. To one of these vaults three tubes of brass are vertically adapted, whose bore

equals that of the largest cannon, and by which, when their cocks are opened, the water of the reservoir falls into an aqueduct formed along the second vault; so that, when you penetrate to these tubes, you have 160 feet of water over your head. We made a point of advancing thus far, by the light which our guide carried in a chaffing-dish; for no other light could have withstood the commotion of the air, which was soon excited under the vault by the bursting out of the waters; when our attendant, with a strong lever of iron, suddenly opened the cock of one of the three tubes, and then that of the other two. We made our way to it amid the sound of this subterraneous thunder; and there we saw three torrents rushing through the opening of the tubes. I know of no motion in nature that can be compared to the violence of the pillar of water which burst from these tubes in waves of foam. The eye could not follow it; we grew giddy by even looking at it. The border of the aqueduct, into which

this torrent rushed, was only four feet broad; it was covered with a very smooth, moist, and slippery kind of freestone. There we stood pale and motionless, and, had our foot slipped, the water of the torrent would have carried us in a twinkling to the distance of a mile. We went out shuddering, and felt the rocks, on which the dike rests, trembling at a hundred paces distance. Though now well acquainted with the mechanism of the canal, I could not but be again astonished when I saw from the foot of the little hill of Beziers a long stair-case, as it were, of eight contiguous locks, by which the vessels rose or descended with equal facility.

At Beziers I met with M. de la Sabliere, an old friend of mine, and a military officer, who, after enjoying for a long time the pleasures of Paris, had come to spend his old age in his native city, and enjoy a respect of which his services were deserving. In the voluptuous retreat which he had formed, he received us

with that Gascon gaiety, which was aided by the comfort of a respectable fortune, by a free and tranquil state of mind, by a taste for reading, by a little of the ancient philosophy, and by that healthful air for which Beziers is so celebrated. He asked about La Popliniere, at whose house we had spent many happy days together. 'Alas!' replied I, 'we now never meet. His fatal selfishness has made him forget the duties of friendship. I will now disclose to you what I have never mentioned to any other person.

'Immediately after the marriage of my sister, I had procured her husband an employment in the tobacco warehouse at Chinon; an easy office, which my sister might have retained even in the event of her husband's death. This office was worth a hundred louis. La Popliniere had at the same time procured for one of his relations the employment of receiver in the customhouse at Saumur, which, though it presented a great variety of very difficult business, was only worth

fifty pounds. Popliniere made no scruple of begging me to make an exchange, alleging the convenience of his friend, who resided at Chinon. As he asked this favour in the name of friendship, I made no hesitation in consenting. I even attempted to persuade myself, that the talents of my brother-in-law would have been buried in a tobacco warehouse, whereas, in a district which required a well-informed, vigilant, and attentive man, his merit might become known, and might thus lead to promotion. I thought myself, therefore, doing him no injury; and this generosity, which I exercised at his expence, was carried to excess; for as the employment of Chinon was double in value to that of Saumur, Popliniere offered, in exchange for this, to give fifty louis a year; but I declined receiving any compensation beyond the mere pleasure of obliging him. Well, this trifling office, in which my brother-in-law had restored order, regularity, and activity, and which he had been allowed

to carry on along with that which he afterwards obtained in the salt-office, was, without my knowledge, solicited by somebody for another, so that my brother-in-law lost it.'—'And did Popliniere really allow you to be deprived of it?'—'What would you have had him do?'—'What! had he no interest with his own body? Ought he not at least to have acknowledged and strongly urged what you had done for him?'—'Well,' added I, 'what will you say, when you learn that he himself, without dropping me the least hint, solicited this employment for his secretary, and took it from my sister's husband?'—'It is impossible.'—'It is but too true; I have been told so, by the farmers-general themselves.' The astonished Sabliere kept silence for some time, and then said, 'My friend, we both loved him: let us think of that alone, and throw a veil over the rest.' Accordingly we merely reminded each other of the happy period, when Popliniere made so agreeable a landlord, and when his

house exhibited a moving gallery of scenes and characters. 'I still love to recollect it,' said he; 'but, like a dream, from which I feel no regret at awaking.'

Montpelier presented nothing interesting, except the botanic garden; and even it was only an agreeable walk to us; for we were both equally ignorant of botany; but as we were connoisseurs in female beauty, we had the pleasure of casting our eyes upon some ladies who, notwithstanding their brown complexion, appeared to us very agreeable. They were distinguished by a lively air, a brisk step, and an ogling eye. I observed in particular that their feet were very handsome, which in every country promises well.

After what we had heard from travellers and artists, we expected that Nismes would have struck us with admiration; but here we were disappointed. There are some things whose grandeur or beauty is so much exaggerated by common report, that the opinion formed at a dis-

tance must unavoidably be diminished by a nearer view. The amphitheatre did not appear to us vast, and the building surprised us only by its lumpish weight. We took pleasure in seeing the *maison quarré*, though only that kind of pleasure which is afforded by a little thing regularly executed.

I must not forget that at Nismes, in the cabinet of a naturalist of the name of Seguier, we saw a collection of grey stones, which, being broken in layers like slate, present very distinctly the appearance of two halves of an incrusted fish. I was not surprised at these till I was assured by this naturalist that the stones are found in the Alps, and that the species of fish which they contain is no longer found in our seas.

Quærite, quos agitat mundi labor. LUCAN.

We passed hastily through Avignon that we might go and fall into extasies at Vaucluse. But here, too, we were obliged to lower the idea we had formed of

the enchanted abode of Petrarch and Laura. The waters of Vaucluse are like those of Castalia, of Peneus, and of Simois. Their fame is due to the muses; their true charm is that of the verses by which they are celebrated. Not but that the cascade in the fountain of Vaucluse is beautiful, both by the quantity of water and by its violent agitation among the rocks, by which its fall is broken: but, with all due submission to the poets who have described it, the fountain is wholly devoid of natural ornaments; its banks are dry, bare, and rough; nor is it till we reach the foot of the cascade, that we see the banks of the stream which it forms, invested with any appearance of smiling verdure. Yet, before leaving the source of its waters, we sat down, we indulged in reverie, and fixed our eyes upon ruins which seemed to be the remains of the residence of Petrarch. We yielded for some moments to a poetical illusion, and fancied we saw wandering around these ruins the

shades of the two lovers, from whom these banks have derived their fame.

A little village, however, which is soon after surrounded, and its walls washed by the river of Vaucluse, is an object more really formed for giving pleasure to the eyes; it is called L'Isle. We really fancied we saw an enchanted isle, as we walked around it, under two rows of mulberry trees, and between two streams of pure and clear water. Handsome groups of young Jewesses, who were walking like us, aided the illusion produced by the beauty of the place; and excellent trouts, with some fine cray-fish, which were served to us in the inn at supper, after this delightful walk, made the pleasures of sight and of imagination be succeeded by those of a new sense.

The fine weather with which our journey had been so agreeably accompanied, ever since we left Paris, left us on the borders of Provence. We met with rain in the province where it rains seldomest

We passed through the city of Aix only, as being on our road to Marseilles and Toulon; we were obliged, however, to pay a customary visit to the governor of the province, who resided in this city. This governor, the unworthy son of Marshal Villars, received me with a politeness which would have been very flattering from any other person. He urged us very much to stay till the *Fete-Dieu*. We declined it; but he made us promise to return to Aix by the evening before this fête, that we might see next day the procession of King René.

These two celebrated ports excited in me a very strong interest and eager attention. The importance of Marseilles was derived from commerce, and that of Toulon from war; and though there was much worth seeing at Marseilles, a new and very magnificent city, yet the little time which we spent there, was wholly employed in examining the harbour, its fortifications, its warehouses, and all the great undertakings which now languished

in consequence of the war, but which peace would again render flourishing. At Toulon, the harbour was, in like manner, the sole object of our attention. We recognized the hand of Lewis the fourteenth in those magnificent establishments, on which his grandeur was stamped, and in which, every thing connected, both with the building and the arming of vessels, still suggested the idea of a respectable naval power.

Here, the thing which seemed most likely to astonish me, was that which occasioned the least surprize. I had been very desirous to see the open sea. I saw it without emotion; the pictures of Vernet had repesented it so faithfully, that the reality excited no strong sensation; my eyes were as accustomed to it as if I had been born on its shores.

The Duke de Villars seemed to have been desirous of our witnessing the gala which he was to give on the evening before the *Fete-Dieu*. We arrived at night, and found all the best company in the

city assembled at a ball, card-party, and great supper.

Next day, the bad weather prevented us from seeing the procession which had been described to us as so brilliant. A few specimens, however, were exhibited; for instance, a drunken porter, who represented the Queen of Sheba; another, who was King Solomon; three others, who were the magi; and every one up to the ears in dirt. This did not prevent the Queen of Sheba from leaping in cadence, and King Solomon from bounding behind her. I admired the seriousness with which the Provençaux viewed this spectacle, and took great care to imitate their respect. Yet I had sometimes great difficulty to keep from laughing. Among others, I observed a person who carried a white cloth at the end of a pole, and behind him three other clumsy fellows, who reeled about in the street like drunkards, every time that the man with the white cloth laid down his staff. I inquired what was the mystery which

this represented? 'Do you not see,' replied the magistrate to whom I spoke, 'that they are the three magi led by the star, and losing their way whenever it disappears.' I suppressed my mirth. Nothing takes away all inclination to laugh so much as the fear of being stoned.

The governor had insisted on our dining with him next day before we set out. At this dinner, he took a pride in assembling men of merit, at the head of whom was M. de Mouclar. I was previously impressed with the highest esteem for this great magistrate. I expressed it with that ingenuous feeling, which bears no resemblance to flattery. He seemed pleased, and answered with kindness. Almost immediately after rising from table, I took leave of the Duke de Villars, as grateful as it was possible to be, for the attention of a man whom I did not esteem.

On our road from Aix to Lyons, I met with nothing remarkable except the honesty of our landlady at Tain, a village near that little territory of Hermitage

which is so celebrated for its wine. At this village, while our horses were changing, I said to the landlady, holding out a louis d'or, 'Madam, if you have any excellent Hermitage red wine, give me six bottles, and pay yourself out of this louis.' She looked as if satisfied with my confidence. 'Excellent red wine,' said she, 'I have none; but I have some of the very best white wine.' I trusted to what she said; and this wine, which she gave me at two livres a bottle, proved to be perfect nectar.

Being in haste to reach Geneva, we did not even take time to see Lyons, but waited till our return, for the pleasure of admiring, in that great and industrious city, the perfection of all the manufactures subservient to luxury.

Nothing could be more singular or more original than the reception we received from Voltaire. He was in bed when we arrived. He held out his arms, embraced me, and wept for joy; he embraced, in like manner, the son of his old friend

M. Gaulard: 'You find me at the point of death,' said he; 'come and restore me to life, or receive my last sigh.' My companion was terrified at this first address. But as I had heard Voltaire say a hundred times that he was dying, I made a sign to Gaulard not to be afraid. Accordingly, next moment, the dying man desired us to sit down by his bed-side. 'My friends,' said he, 'how happy I am to see you, especially at a time when I have a man whom you will be delighted to hear. It is M. d'Ecluse, surgeon-dentist to the late King of Poland, and now proprietor of an estate near Montargis. He has been kind enough to come, and repair the irreparable teeth of Madame Denis. He is a delightful man; but do you not know him?'—'The only L'Ecluse that I know,' said I, 'is an actor in the old opera-comique.'—'It is he, my friend; it is just himself. Since you know him, you have heard that song of the *Grinder* which he acts and sings so well.' Instantly then Voltaire begins imitating L'Ecluse,

and with his naked arms, and his sepulchral voice, acts the Grinder, and sings the song. We fell into bursts of laughter; but he went on quite seriously. 'I am a bad imitator,' said he, 'you must hear L'Ecluse; he is truth itself. Oh what pleasure will it give you! Go and call upon Madame Denis. As for myself, indisposed as I am, I will rise and dine with you. We will eat some wild-fowl, and shall hear M. de l'Ecluse. My illness has been suspended by the pleasure of seeing you, and I feel myself quite a new man.'

Madame Denis received us with that cordiality, in which consisted the charm of her character. She presented L'Ecluse to us; and at dinner, Voltaire excited him by the most flattering praises to give us the pleasure of hearing him. He displayed all his talents, with which we pretended to be charmed. This was absolutely necessary, for Voltaire would never have forgiven us had our applauses been faint.

Our walk in the garden was spent in talking of Paris, of the *Mercure*, of the Bastile, (which I passed over in a few words), of the theatre, of the *Encyclopédie*, and of poor Le Franc, whom he was still harassing; for his physician, he said, had ordered him, by way of exercise, to hunt Pompignan an hour or two every morning. He told me to assure our friends, that they should daily receive from him some new piece of pleasantry, and he faithfully kept his promise.

On our return from walking, he played a few games at chess with M. Gaulard, who, out of respect, allowed him to win. At last he returned to speak of the theatre, and of the revolution which had been effected in it by Mademoiselle Clairon. 'Well,' said he, 'is there any thing so very wonderful in the new style which she has adopted?'—'It is a new talent,' said I; 'it is the perfection of the art, or rather it is nature herself, such as she

can be painted by the most beautiful imagination.' I then assumed a higher tone of thought and expression, in the hope of enabling him to conceive how truly and how sublimely she became, according to her different characters, Camilla, Roxana, Hermione, Ariana, and, above all, Electra. I exhausted all the little eloquence I possessed in inspiring him with the same enthusiasm for Clairon which animated myself; and I was enjoying the emotion which my words produced, till at last he began to speak. 'Well, my friends,' said he, with transport, 'this is just like Madame Denis; the progress she has made is astonishing, incredible. I wish you saw her acting Zara, Alzira, Idame; nothing can go beyond her.'—'Madame Denis act Zara? Madame Denis compared to Clairon?' I fell from the clouds; so true it is that taste suits itself to the objects which it has the means of enjoying; and that the sage maxim,

Quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime,
*Il faut aimer ce que l'on a..... **

is not only a lesson given us by nature, but one of the means which she reserves for augmenting our pleasures.

We resumed our walk; and while Voltaire talked with Gaulard of his former acquaintance with this young man's father, I conversed with Madame Denis, and reminded her of the agreeable time we had spent together.

In the evening, I led Voltaire to the subject of the King of Prussia. He talked of him with a sort of cool magnanimity, like a man who disdained a too easy revenge, or like an undeceived lover, who, after quitting his mistress, forgives the resentment and rage in which she has indulged.

Our conversation at supper turned upon the literary men whom he esteem-

* When a man has not what he likes, he must like what he has.

ed most; and among these I could easily distinguish such as he loved from the bottom of his heart. They were not those who boasted most loudly of being in his favour. Before going to bed, he read to us two new cantos of the Maid of Orleans; and Madame Denis desired us to observe that, since he came to Delices, this was the only day he had spent without returning to his closet.

Next day we took care to leave him at least part of the morning, and we let him know that we would wait till he rang. We were introduced about eleven, and found him still in bed. 'Young man,' said he, 'I hope you have not given up poetry; let me see some of your new compositions; I tell you all I know; let each take his turn.'

I felt more afraid in his presence than I had ever done; either from having lost the ingenuous confidence of early youth, or from feeling better than ever the difficulty of writing good poetry. I could scarcely prevail upon myself to repeat

my "Address to the Poets:" he was very well satisfied, and asked if it was known at Paris. I answered, no. 'Then,' said he, 'you must offer it to the academy; it will make some noise.' I represented that it breathed a freedom of opinion, which would incense a number of persons. 'Well,' said he, 'a respectable lady of my acquaintance acknowledged, that one day after having exclaimed against the insolence of her lover, she had at last unguardedly said, "delightful insolence:" now the academy will do the same.'

Before dinner, he took me to pay some visits at Geneva; and talking of his mode of life with the Genevese, 'It is very pleasant,' said he, 'to live in a country whose sovereigns send and ask your carriage, that they may come and dine with you.'

He kept open house for them; they spent whole days with him; and as the gates of the city were shut at the approach of night, and were not opened till

day-break, those who supped with him were obliged to sleep either at Delices, or in the country houses which cover the banks of the lake.

On our way, I asked him how it happened that Geneva, which had scarcely any territory, and no opportunity of foreign commerce, had become so rich. 'By making watches,' said he, 'by reading your gazettes, and by taking advantage of your follies. These people understand how to calculate the profit on your loans.' Talking of Geneva, he asked what I thought of Rousseau? I replied, that his writings appeared to me to be only those of an eloquent sophist, and his character that of a pretended cynic, who would burst with pride and rage in his tub, if people gave up looking at him. As to the desire which had seized him of assuming this character, I knew how it arose, and told him the story.

'In one of Rousseau's letters to M. de Malesherbes, you recollect how he describes the fit of inspiration and enthu-

siasm in which he formed the design of declaring himself against the arts and sciences. "I was going," says he, in his own account of this miracle, "I was go-
"ing to see Diderot, who was then a pri-
"soner at Vincennes; I had in my pocket
"a *Mercure de France*, which I began to
"turn over as I passed along. I came to
"the question proposed by the academy of
"Dijon, which gave occasion to my first
"production. If any thing ever resembled
"sudden inspiration, it was the emotion
"which arose in me on reading this ques-
"tion. Suddenly I felt my mind dazzled
"with light from a thousand quarters;
"crowds of bright ideas rushed in at once,
"with a force and a confusion which threw
"me into inexpressible disorder. My
"head was seized with a giddiness resemb-
"ling infoxication. I was oppressed; my
"breast heaved with a violent palpitation.
"No longer able to breathe in a walking
"posture, I threw myself under a tree in
"the avenue, where I spent half an hour in
"such a state of agitation, that, on rising,

" I perceived all the fore part of my waist-
" coat watered with tears, which I had
" not been conscious of shedding."

Here we have an ecstasy eloquently described. The following is the plain fact, such as Diderot told me, and as I related to Voltaire. I shall tell it in the words of Diderot.

" I was," says Diderot, " a prisoner at
" Vincennes. Rousseau came to see me.
" He had, according to his own expression,
" made me his Aristarchus. One day that
" we were walking together, he told me,
" that the academy of Dijon had just pro-
" posed an interesting question, which he
" was desirous of treating. This question
" was, *Has the restoration of the arts and*
" *sciences tended to increase purity of*
" *morals?* Which side will you take?
" inquired I.—He replied, The affirm-
" ative.—That, said I, is the asses
" bridge; all men of middling talents will
" follow this path, and you will find it
" yield only common ideas; whereas the
" opposite side presents a new and fruitful

"field of philosophy and eloquence.—"You are in the right, said he, after "thinking a moment; I will follow your "advice." 'This moment, therefore,' continued I, 'decided his character, and the mask which he was to assume.'

'You do not at all surprize me,' said Voltaire; 'this man is artificial from head to foot; his mind and soul are wholly artificial. But it is in vain for him to act the stoic and cynic alternately; he will constantly betray himself, and will be suffocated by his own mask.'

Of all the Genevese whom I met in his house, the only persons whose society I liked, and who liked mine, were the Chevalier Hubert, and Cramer the bookseller. They were both easy in conversation, of a jovial humour, and unaffected wit, a thing rarely met with in their city. Cramer, I was told, could perform tolerably in tragedy; he was the Orosman of Madame Denis, and this talent had procured him the friendship and employment of Voltaire, which last was worth many

thousands to him. Hubert's talent was less useful, but with all its frivolity, was curious and amusing. You would have said that he had eyes at his fingers' ends. With his hands behind his back, he cut out a profile, as like, and even more so, than could have been done by the pencil. The figure of Voltaire was so strongly impressed upon his imagination, that whether absent or present, his scissars presented him thinking, writing, going about, and in every possible attitude. I have seen landscapes cut out by him upon leaves of white paper, in which the rules of perspective were observed with wonderful art. These two agreeable Genevese were constant visitors at Delices during the little time I spent there.

M. de Voltaire proposed to shew us the castle of Tornay, at half a mile from Geneva, where he kept his theatre. One afternoon we made it the boundary of a ride, which he took us in his carriage. Tornay was a small country seat, a good deal neglected, but which possessed an admir-

able prospect. In the valley lies the lake of Geneva, having its banks covered with country seats, and terminated by two large cities; while in the distance lies a chain of mountains, thirty leagues in extent, and Mont-Blanc covered with ice and snow which never melt. There I saw the little theatre, which was the torment of Rousseau, and in which Voltaire found consolation under his banishment from that, which was still full of his glory. I was struck with grief and indignation on thinking of this unjust and tyrannical privation. Perhaps he perceived this; for by his observations he more than once answered my thoughts; and on our way home, he talked of Versailles, of the long stay I had made there, and of the kindness which Madame de Pompadour formerly expressed for him. 'She loves you still,' said I; 'I have often heard her say so. But she is weak, and either dares not, or cannot do all that she would; for the poor woman is no longer loved; nay, perhaps she envies the lot of Madame

Denis, and would gladly come to *Delices.*' —'Let her come,' said he, with transport, 'and act tragedy with us. I will write characters for her, and royal characters. She is handsome, and should be acquainted with the passion of love.'—'She is acquainted also,' said I, 'with deep grief, and with bitter tears.'—'So much the better! that is just what we want,' exclaimed he, as if delighted to get a new actress. And one would really have thought that he expected to see her arrive. 'Since she will suit your purpose,' said I, 'leave it to me; if the theatre of Versailles fail her, I will tell her that your's is open.'

The company were diverted by this romantic idea. They overlooked its improbability; and Madame Denis, yielding to the illusion, already besought her uncle that he would not force her to yield her characters to the new actress. He withdrew into his closet for a few hours; and, at supper, in the evening, the conversation turning upon kings and

their mistresses, Voltaire began comparing the wit and gallantry of the old court with that of the present, and laid open that rich memory, which never forgot any thing interesting. From Madame de la Valiere to Madame de Pompadour, the secret history of the two reigns, and of the regency which intervened, passed rapidly before our eyes in the most brilliant and dazzling colours. He reproached himself, however, for robbing L'Ecluse of moments, which, he said, might have been employed by him more agreeably for the company. He begged him to make it up by a few scenes of the Apple-woman, and laughed at them like a child.

Next day, which was the last we were to spend together, he sent for me in the morning, and put a manuscript into my hands. 'Go into my closet,' said he, 'and read that; you will then tell me what you think of it.' It was the tragedy of Tancred, which he had just completed. I read it, and returning with my face bathed in tears, I told him that he had

never produced any thing more interesting. 'To whom,' said he, 'would you give the character of Amenaide?'—'To Clairon,' replied I, 'to the sublime Clairon; and I assure you of its meeting with success, at least equal to that of Zara.'—'Your tears,' replied he, 'assure me of what I am most anxious to know; but has nothing appeared to you to interrupt the progress of the story?'—'I found no room,' said I, 'for any but what you call closet criticisms. An audience will be too much affected to make them.' Luckily he did not speak of the versification; I should then have been under the necessity of disguising my thoughts; for *Tancred* appeared to me greatly inferior, in this respect, to his fine tragedies. In his *Rome Saved*, and in the *Orphan of China*, I had still discovered the beautiful versification of *Zara*, of *Merope*, and of the *Death of Cæsar;* but *Tancred* appeared to shew the decline of his poetry. The lines were mean, diffuse, loaded with those redundant words which disguise

the want of energy; in a word, the old age of the poet appeared; for in his poetry, as in that of Corneille, versification was the first part which shewed symptoms of decay; and after Tancred, in which the fire of his genius still threw out some sparks, it was wholly extinguished.

Being distressed at our departure, he was so good as not to deprive us of any part of this last day. The conversation, during our walk, turned upon his desire to see me received into the French academy; his praise of my Tales, which formed, he said, his most agreeable reading; and, lastly, my Examination of Rousseau's Letter to D'Alembert upon Public Places, a refutation which he thought unanswerable, and on which he appeared to set much value. I asked him if Rousseau had succeeded in blinding Geneva with regard to the true motive of this letter. 'Rousseau,' said he, 'is better known at Geneva than at Paris. Nobody there is the dupe either of his pretended zeal, or

of his false eloquence. His enmity to me is too obvious. Engrossed by a furious pride, he would wish nobody but himself to be talked of in his country. My character throws a shade over his; he envies me the very air that I breathe, and particularly cannot endure that, by the amusement I sometimes afford to Geneva, I should sometimes divert their thoughts from him to myself.'

As we were to set out at day-break, as soon as the gates of the city were opened, and horses could be procured, we resolved, along with Madame Denis and Messrs. Hubert and Cramer, to prolong till that time the pleasure of sitting up and talking together. Voltaire would be of the party, and we in vain urged him to go to bed; he was more awake than we, and read a few more cantos of the Maid of Orleans. The manner in which he read it was inexpressibly delightful; for though Voltaire, in repeating heroic verses, affected, as I thought, too monotonous a tone, and too strong a

cadence, no one repeated familiar and humorous verses with such ease, delicacy, and grace; his eyes and his smile had an expression which I never observed in any other person. Alas! it was for me the song of the swan, for I was never to see him more till he was about to expire.

At taking leave of each other, we were affected even to tears, but the sorrow was much greater on my side than on his. This was natural; for, independently of my gratitude, and of all the reasons he had given me to love him, I left him in a state of exile.

At Lyons we spent a day with the family of Fleurieu, who waited for me at La Tourette, his country house. The two following days were spent in seeing the city; and we took a view of all the manufactures, from the formation of gold and silk thread, to the perfection of the richest fabrics, which produced the wealth of this flourishing city. The workshops, the town-house, the fine hospital *De la Charité*, the library of the Jesuits, the

convent of the Chartreuse, the theatre, successively drew our attention.

Here I recollect, that when I passed formerly through this city, in my way to Geneva, Mademoiselle Destouche, the manager of the theatre, desired me to be asked which of my tragedies I should wish to see represented on my return. I was pleased with this attention; but I merely thanked her for it, and asked, on return, to see that tragedy of Voltaire which her actors performed best. They gave *Alzire*.

While my epicurean philosophy was thus enjoying itself in the provinces, the hatred of my enemies at Paris was not asleep. On my arrival there, I learned that D'Argental and his wife were circulating a report, that I had lost the king's favour, and that, though the academy might elect me, his majesty would refuse his consent. I found my friends much affected by this report; and had I been as impatient to see myself in the academy, as they were, I should have been

extremely unhappy. But while I shewed them that, in spite of intrigue, I should be able to obtain that place whence my enemies sought to exclude me, I declared that, after all, my pride would be sufficiently gratified, by deserving, even though I did not obtain it. I set myself down then to finish my translation of Pharsalia, and my French Art of Poetry. I offered my Address to the Poets to the academy; and I composed new tales, as the editions of the former multiplied.

The success of the Address to the Poets was such as Voltaire had foretold; but it was not without difficulty that it carried the prize against two valuable works which came in competition with it: one was the Address to the People, by Thomas; the other was the Abbé Delille's Poem upon the advantages of Retirement to men of letters. This occurrence in my life was so remarkable, that it may deserve to occupy a moment's attention.

Scarce had I offered my poem to the academy, when Thomas, according to custom, came and shewed me that which he was going to send. It appeared to me beautiful, and written in so firm and dignified a tone, that I thought it at least very possible that it might be judged superior to mine. 'My friend,' said I, after having heard and praised it very much, 'I too have something to entrust to you; but I do it on two conditions: one, that you will observe the most profound secrecy; the other, that after having heard what I am going to tell you, you will make no use of it; that is to say, you will act just as if I had told you nothing. I demand your promise.' He gave it. 'Now,' continued I, 'know that I myself have offered a work to the academy.'—'In that case,' said he, 'I withdraw mine.'—'That is what I will not admit of,' replied I, 'for two reasons; one, because it is very possible that my work may be rejected as heretical, and that it may be refused the prize; you

shall judge of this yourself; the other, because it is not certain that my work is of more value than yours, and I do not wish to rob you of a prize which is perhaps your due. I must therefore insist on your adhering to the promise you have given. Listen to my poem.' He heard it, and allowed that there were bold and dangerous passages. We were therefore amicable rivals to each other, and competitors with the Abbé Delille.

One day when the academy, with the view of bestowing the prize, were examining the pieces presented to them, I met Duclos at the opera, and put some questions to him on this subject. 'Do not talk of it,' said he; 'this competition will, I believe, set the academy on fire. The prize is disputed by three pieces, such as we seldom meet with. There are two, whose merit is unquestionable; but the third turns our heads. It is the work of a young madman, full of warmth and boldness, who spares nothing, who braves all literary prejudices, talks of poets as a

poet, and with perfect freedom paints them all in their true colours. He dares to praise Lucan, and to censure Virgil, to vindicate Tasso from the contempt of Boileau, to pass sentence on Boileau himself, and reduce him to his real value. D'Olivet is furious; he says, the academy is disgraced if it crowns this insolent work, and yet I believe that it will be crowned.' It *was* crowned. But, when I appeared to receive the prize, D'Olivet swore that he would never forgive me.

It was about this time, I believe, that I published my translation of Pharsalia; from that time, my studies were divided between rhetoric and poetry, while my tales stole a few occasional intervals.

The country was particularly favourable to that species of composition, and opportunity sometimes led me to very good subjects. For instance, when I was supping one evening with M. de Saint-Florentin in his country house at Besons, the conversation turned on my tales: 'There has happened,' says he, 'in this

village an adventure, out of which you might perhaps make something interesting.' And in a few words he related, that a young peasant, and a girl, who was his cousin-german, had fallen in love with each other, and the girl had proved with child; that as neither the curate nor the rector would allow them to marry, they had recourse to him, and that he had been obliged to procure a dispensation from Rome. I allowed, that this subject, properly managed, might possess some degree of interest. At night, when I was alone, it recurred to my mind, and seized upon me so completely, that in an hour, all the images, all the scenes, and even the characters, were drawn, and present, as it were, before my eyes. At this time, that kind of writing cost me no trouble; it flowed spontaneously, and as soon as the tale had been properly planned in my head, it was written. Instead of sleeping, I spent the whole night in composing this story. I saw, I heard Annette and Lubin speak as distinctly as

if this fiction had been the fresh recollection of what I had seen the evening before. I rose at day-break, and had then only to throw rapidly upon paper what I had composed; and my tale was written precisely as it is printed.

After dinner, before we went out to walk, the company asked, as they often did in the country, if I had any thing to read, and I read Annette and Lubin. I cannot describe the surprize of the whole party, and particularly the joy of M. de Saint-Florentin, at seeing in how short a time I had filled up the picture of which he had given me the sketch. He proposed to send for the real Annette and Lubin, but this I begged to dispense with. However, when a comic-opera was written on this tale, the Lubin and Annette of Besons were invited to come and see themselves on the stage. They were present at this spectacle in a box assigned to them, and were very much applauded.

When my imagination was once directed towards this kind of fiction, it became, in the country, a kind of enchantress, which, whenever I was alone, surrounded me with its illusions; sometimes at Malmaison, by the side of a brook, which rolls with a rapid descent from the top of the hill, and under verdant bowers, takes long windings around the flowery turfs; sometimes at Croix-Fontaine, on those banks watered by the Seine, which there describes an immense semicircle, as if for the very purpose of delighting the eye; sometimes in those beautiful alleys of St. Assise, or on the long terrace which commands the Seine, and from which the eye surveys at a distance the tranquil course of its majestic stream.

The friends whom I went to see in these rural excursions, kindly assumed the appearance of desiring my company, and of receiving me with joy. They seemed to think the happy days I spent there as short as I did, and never saw me depart without expressing regret. For

my part, I should gladly have united them in one society, or have multiplied myself, so as never to quit any. They bore no resemblance to each other; but each possessed for me its peculiar charm.

Malmaison belonged then to M. Desfourniels; the society I met here was that of Madame Harenc. I have already mentioned the close ties of friendship and gratitude by which my heart was bound to it. The woman who, next to my mother, loved me most dearly, was Madame Harenc. She seemed to have inspired all her friends with the same tender interest in my welfare, which she herself felt. To love, and to be loved, in this circle of friends, was the constant habit of my life.

At St. Assise, with Madame de Montulé, friendship was not free from reserve and distrust. I was young; and young ladies thought it necessary to be on their guard with me. On my side, the degree of liberty in which I indulged was moderate, and respectfully timid. But there was something even in this restraint

which was delicate and pleasing. Besides, I liked the regular life, and agreeable attention to every kind of improvement, which prevailed at S^t. Assise. Both father and mother were continually employed in rendering instruction easy and engaging to their children. The former, with his own hand, made for their use a curious selection from the *Memoires de l'Academie de Sciences*; the latter formed an abridgment of the Natural History of Buffon, in which she retained only what could be read by them with safety and propriety. There was a governess for the two girls, who taught them history, geography, arithmetic, Italian, and still more carefully the rules of the French language, which she daily employed them in writing correctly: after dinner, all the ladies took up their drawing materials; and this occupation, enlivened by gay sallies, or by agreeable reading, served as their recreation. When we went to walk, M. de Montulé turned the attention of his children to the knowledge of trees

and of plants, of which he made them form a kind of herbal, containing an explanation of the nature, the properties, and the use of these vegetables. Lastly, even in our sports, ingenious artifices were continually employed to rouse emulation, and render them useful, as well as agreeable, by insinuating instruction in the form of amusement. Such was the picture presented to me by this domestic school, in which study never wore the appearance of restraint, nor instruction that of severity.

You may well suppose that a father and mother, who instructed their children so carefully, were themselves very well informed. M. de Montulé did not study to be agreeable, and gave himself little trouble upon that head; but Madame de Montulé had in her mind and character a tincture of decent coquetry, which, when joined to decorum, renders the agreeable qualities of a woman more brilliant and alluring. She called me a philosopher, fully persuaded that I had very

little of that character; and to laugh at my philosophy was one of her pastimes. I perceived it, but I allowed her to indulge that pleasure.

The worthy and plain Madame de Chalut, with still greater cordiality, drew me to S^t. Cloud; and she retained me there by the irresistible charm of a friendship which led her to open her whole heart to me, and to pour into mine, without reserve, her most secret thoughts, and her dearest interests. She, indeed, was not necessary to my happiness, but I was necessary to hers. Her soul had need of mine to rest upon, and thus to relieve itself from the weight of her sorrows. She had one, the horror of which is inexpressible; she saw her old master and mistress, her benefactors, her friends, the dauphin and dauphiness, struck at once by an invisible hand, and consumed by what she called a slow poison, waste away, and die.* It was to me that she

* See note (15) at the end.

expressed her anguish on account of this slow death. She added other secrets, which were disclosed to me alone, and which will follow me to the silence of the tomb.

But of all the rural retreats in which I successively spent the fine seasons of the year, Maisons and Croix-Fontaine were the most attractive. I took only short excursions to Croix-Fontaine; but there Bouret, like an enchanter, assembled every kind of voluptuous luxury, every refinement of the most ingenious and delicate gallantry. He was allowed to be the most obliging and magnificent of men: people could talk of nothing but the graceful manner in which he conferred an obligation. Alas! you will soon see the abyss of misfortune into which he was drawn by this amiable and fatal propensity. However, as he possessed two great offices in the finance, that of farmer-general and farmer of the posts; as his connections and his couriers afforded him besides, the means of procuring for his

table every thing most exquisite and rare that the kingdom produced, and as he was constantly receiving presents from those whose fortunes he had made, his friends viewed his profusion only as the effect of his credit, and the use he was making of his wealth.

But Madame Gaulard, who probably took a deeper and sounder view than I of the affairs of her friend, and who was grieved at the expences in which his fortune was dissipated, not choosing that she should afford either an occasion or a pretext for them, had taken at Maisons, on the road to Croix-Fontaine, a plain and modest house, where she lived without any company, having with her only a niece, of an agreeable character, with all the gaiety of fifteen. I have drawn the character of Madame Gaulard in one of my tales *De la Veillée*, into which I have introduced myself under the name of Ariste. The simplicity, mildness, and peaceful equality of her character, had

suited itself so readily to mine, that scarce had she become acquainted with me at Paris, and at Croix-Fontaine, when she became desirous of my intimate friendship in her retreat at Maisons; and by degrees I myself found it so agreeable, that at last I made it my residence, not only during summer, but for whole winters, when she preferred the silence and repose of the country to the noise and tumult of the city. How delightful was this solitude to me! The reader suspects the cause, and I should make no secret of it; for nothing could be more legitimate than my views and intentions. But, as they were not crowned with success, it remains only as one of those dreams whose recollection is interesting only to the person through whose mind they have passed. It is enough to know that this peaceful retreat was that in which my days flowed on most rapidly and smoothly.

While I thus forgot both the world and the academy; while I forgot even myself, my friends, who thought literary

honours usurped by all those who obtained them before me, were impatient when they saw in one year four new vacant places, of which I was always disappointed. But I felt no emotion; while, at every new election, my enemies, besieging the gates of the academy, redoubled their efforts to keep me at a distance.

Talking of the parody of Cinna, I forgot to mention that there was a word which provoked the Count de Choiseul-Praslin, then ambassador at Vienna. Augustus, you know, said to Cinna and Maximus,

*Vous qui me tenez lieu d'Agrippe et de Mecene.**

This line was thus parodied:

Vous qui me tenez lieu du merle et de ma femme.†

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* You who supply to me the place of Agrippa and of Mecenas.

† You who supply to me the place of the blackbird and of my wife.

Now this title of the blackbird was a nickname given to the Count de Praslin. When therefore he had taken *La Dangeville* for his mistress, Grandval, who preceded him, and whom she wished to retain as an auxiliary, replied,

Le merle a trop souillé la cage,
Le moineau n'y veut plus entrer. ‡

This line of the parody, therefore,

Vous qui me tenez lieu du merle et de ma femme. ||

had been represented to the Duke de Choiseul as one of my crimes; and in our conference he mentioned it as an insult offered to his cousin. I was so weak as to answer, that this was not one of the lines which I had got. 'And pray, then,' asked he urgently, 'what was the

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‡ The blackbird has too much sullied the cage; the sparrow will enter it no more.

|| You who supply to me the place of the blackbird and of my wife.

line which you got?' I answered, to get out of the scrape,

Vous qui me tenez lieu de ma défunte femme.§

'Fy,' exclaimed he, 'that is a poor line; the other is far better! there is no comparison.' Praslin was not a man to take the matter so lightly. He had a mean and gloomy soul; and in men of this character, wounded pride is inexorable.

On his return from his embassy, he was made minister of state for foreign affairs. Then, like a profound politician, he held a council with D'Argental and his wife upon the means of barring, at least for some time longer, my entrance into the academy.

Thomas gained the prizes of eloquence, with a great superiority over all his rivals. They determined to make him my opponent; and, with that view, the Count de Praslin began with attaching him to him-

§ You who supply to me the place of my deceased wife.

self, by making him his secretary, and by procuring him his appointment of Swiss interpreter. He thus assumed the honourable appearance of protecting a man of merit. The littleness of the vengeance which they were planning against me seemed to be adorned and ennobled; and they waited only for the proper time for bringing forward Thomas, in order to shut against me the path to the academy.

Meanwhile, my friends and myself, while we rejoiced at any thing good which happened to Thomas, were contriving how to remove the obstacle, which, in the opinion of the academicians, opposed my election. 'They will never dare,' said D'Alembert, 'to elect you so long as they believe that you will be rejected by the king. D'Argental, Praslin, and the Duke d'Aumont, represent this rejection as certain. You must absolutely destroy the credit of this report.'

Having recovered my favour with Ma-

dame de Pompadour, I disclosed to her my trouble, and begged her to ask the king if he would be favourable. She was so kind as to ask him; and his answer was, that if I should be elected, he would give his consent. 'Then, madam,' said I, 'I may assure the academy of this?'—'No,' said she, 'no; you might thereby commit me; you must just say that you have reason to hope for the king's consent.'—'But, madan,' urged I, 'if the king has positively said....'—'I know,' replied she, with warmth, 'what the king has said; but do I know what those above will make him say?' These words closed my lips; and I came and gave D'Alembert this melancholy account of what had passed.

After he had vented his rage against weak minds, we determined that I should content myself with declaring my hopes, in a manner, however, which might make it be understood that they were well-founded; and, accordingly, the death of Marivaux, in 1763, having left a vacant

place, I paid the accustomed visits, like a man who had nothing to fear from the court. Yet I was distressed about this anxiety of Madame de Pompadour, as to what the king might be made to say: I endeavoured to contrive some means of securing him, and thought I had found one; but at present it was impossible to employ it. My Art of Poetry was the instrument I meant to make use of; but though it was printing, some months must still elapse before it could be published. Luckily the Abbé de Radonvilliers, formerly sub-preceptor to the royal family, offered himself, at the same time with me, as a candidate for the vacant place; and by yielding this place to him, I was doing an agreeable thing to the dauphin, perhaps to the king himself. I went to Versailles, therefore, and informed my competitor of my resolution to withdraw. Here I had little merit, for he would have prevailed; yet such was his modesty, that he expressed gratitude for this step, as if he had been indebted

to me alone for the union of all the votes in his favour.

A very remarkable occurrence at this election, was the artifice employed by my enemies, and by those of D'Alembert and Duclos, in order to render us odious in the eyes of the dauphin. They had begun with spreading a report that my party would oppose the Abbé Radonvilliers, and that, if he had a majority on the first scrutiny, he would not, in the second, at least, escape the affront of black balls. Having made this prediction, the next point was to verify it; and the scheme they fell upon was the following.—The academy contained four members who went by the name of philosophers; an appellation which was then odious. The academicians thus designated, were Duclos, D'Alembert, Saurin, and Watelet. The worthy leaders of the opposite party, D'Olivet, Batteux, and probably Paulmi, and Seguier, treacherously formed the design of themselves throwing in black balls, the blame of which would fall on the phi-

losophers; and accordingly four black balls were found in the ballot.

Those who had thrown them in broke out into loud murmurs of astonishment; and the rogues, fixing their eyes upon the four, to whom the suspicion attached, loudly exclaimed how strange it was, that a man so blameless and so estimable as the Abbé de Radonvilliers, should be affronted with four black balls. The Abbé d'Olivet was quite indignant at so shameful, so crying a disgrace; the four philosophers looked very much confounded: but the tables were soon turned in their favour, and to the disgrace of their enemies. This turn was given in the following manner. The academy, when they elected by ballot, were accustomed to distribute two balls, a black and a white, among each of the electors. The box, into which they let them drop, had also two capsules, and above these two cups, one black, and the other white. Those who meant to favour the candidate, put the white ball into the white cup, and

the black into the black; and when they were against him, they put the white ball into the black cup, and the black into the white. Thus, when the ballot was examined, the whole number of balls ought to be found, with as many white balls in the black capsule, as there were black in the white.

Now, Duclos, one of the philosophers, having, by a kind of divination, foreseen the trick that was to be played upon them, had said to his companions, 'Let us keep our black balls in our hands, so that, if these scoundrels are so ill-natured as to throw them in, we may be able to produce a proof that the balls were not put in by us.' Having, therefore, allowed D'Olivet and the other rogues to murmur for some time against the evil-disposed, Duclos opened his hand, and said, 'It is not I who threw in the black ball; for luckily I have kept mine, and here it is.'—'Neither is it I,' said D'Alembert, 'for here is mine.' Watelet and Saurin said and did the same thing. At

this unexpected blow, the confusion was thrown back upon the authors of the trick. D'Olivet was so simple as to accuse them of unfairness in having parried his blow by keeping their black balls, alleging the laws of the academy, with regard to the inviolable secrecy of the ballot. 'M. l'Abbé,' said D'Alembert, 'self-defence is the first of laws, and we had no other means of obviating the suspicion which was intended to be thrown upon us.'

This mark of foresight on the part of Duclos became generally known, while the D'Olivets, and the manner in which they had been taken in the snare, were laughed at by the whole court.

The printing of my Art of Poetry being at last completed, I besought Madame de Pompadour to obtain permission from the king, that a work which filled up a blank in our literature, should be presented to him. 'This,' said I, 'is a favour which will cost neither the king nor the state any thing, and which will

prove that the king is well inclined towards me.' I owe this testimony to the memory of this beneficent woman, that, on hearing this easy and simple mode of publicly determining the king in my favour, her fine countenance sparkled with joy. 'Willingly,' said she, 'will I ask this favour from the king, and I shall obtain it.' She obtained it without difficulty; and said, when she announced it, 'You must give this presentation every possible solemnity; all the royal family, and all the ministers, must, on the same day, receive the work from your own hand.'

I disclosed this secret only to my intimate friends; and having got my copies very magnificently bound, (for I spared no cost on them), I went one Saturday evening to Versailles with my packet. As soon as I arrived, I begged, through Quesnai, that Madame de Pompadour would dispose the king to give me a favourable reception.

Next day I was introduced by the Duke de Duras. The king was at his levee, and never did I see him so handsome. He received my homage with an enchanting look. My joy would have been at its height had he just spoken three words; but his eyes spoke for him. The dauphin, who had been prepossessed in my favour by the Abbé de Radonvilliers, was so good as speak to me. 'I have heard very favourable accounts of this work,' said he; 'I think highly of the author.' While saying these words, he wrung my heart with sorrow, for I saw death in his countenance and in his eyes.

During the whole of this ceremony, the worthy Duke de Duras was my guide; and I cannot describe the warmth with which he interested himself in procuring me a good reception.

When I went to call at Madame de Pompadour, to whom I had already presented my work, 'Go,' said she, 'to M. de Choiseul, and offer him his copy; you will meet a friendly reception: and leave

that of M. de Praslin with me; I will present it myself.'

After my expedition, I went immediately and informed D'Alembert and Duclos of the success I had met with. I distributed copies to such of the academicians as I knew to be my friends. Mairan said that this work was a mine, which I had laid under the door of the academy to make it blow up, in case it was shut against me; but all my difficulties were not yet got over.

Duclos and D'Alembert had, in the presence of the whole academy, got into some altercation or other, on the subject of the King of Prussia, and the Cardinal de Bernis: they had quarrelled to such a degree that they were no longer on speaking terms; so that, at the moment when their union and good understanding would be necessary to me, I found them enemies to each other. Duclos, the bluntest of the two, but the least passionate, was also the least offended. The enmity of such a man as D'Alembert was painful to

him; he was anxious to be reconciled; but he wished me to prevail on D'Alembert to make the first advances.

'I am quite indignant,' said he, 'at the oppression under which you have groaned, and at the mean and secret persecution which you still experience. It is time to put an end to it. Bougainville is dying; you must have his place. Say to D'Alembert that I am most desirous of securing it to you; let him just speak to me on the subject at the academy; we will arrange our matters for next election.'

D'Alembert broke into a furious passion, when I proposed that he should speak to Duclos. 'Let him go to the devil,' said he, 'with his Abbé de Bernis: I will have nothing more to do with either the one or the other.'—'In that case,' said I, 'I give up all thoughts of the academy; I only regret having ever entertained any.'—'How so?' replied he, with warmth; 'cannot you procure admission without the aid of Duclos?'—

'And is there any one whose aid would be superfluous, when my friends abandon me, and when my enemies are more eager and active than ever, in their attempts to injure me. They, alas! would speak to the devil himself, were it to deprive me of a single vote; but I experience myself, what I formerly said in verse,

L'amitié se rebute, et le malheur le glace;
*La haine est implacable, et jamais ne se lasse.'**

—'You shall be admitted a member, in spite of your enemies,' replied he.—'No, sir, no; I shall not, I will not; I should be hooted at, supplanted, and insulted by a party who are already too numerous and too powerful. I choose rather to live in obscurity; and for that purpose, thank heaven, I shall need no one's assistance.'—'But, Marmontel, you are angry, I know not why....'—'But I

* Friendship is liable to take offence, and is frozen by misfortune; hatred is implacable, and never tires.

know it well; the friend of my heart, the man in the world on whom I depend most, has only two words to say, in order to deliver me from oppression....'—'Well, well, I will say them, but nothing in my life ever cost me so much.'—'Has Duclos then injured you so very grievously?'—'How! do you not then know the insolence with which, at a meeting of the academy, he spoke of the King of Prussia?'—'Of the King of Prussia! and how is that king affected by the insolence of Duclos? Ah, D'Alembert, if you only needed the vote of my most cruel enemy, if my forgiveness were sufficient to secure it, I would go immediately and take him in my arms.'—'Come,' said he, 'this very evening I am reconciled with Duclos; but he must serve you well; for it is only to that end, and out of love to you....'—'He will serve me well,' said I; and accordingly, Duclos, delighted to see D'Alembert again his friend, made as warm exertions in my favour as himself.

But, at the death of Bougainville, and at the time when I was hoping to meet with no farther obstacle, D'Alembert sent for me. 'Do you know,' said he, 'the plot that is hatching? A rival is opposed to you, in whose favour, Praslin, D'Argental, and his wife, are soliciting votes both at city and court. They boast of having procured a very great number, and I am afraid of it, for this rival is Thomas.'—'I do not believe,' said I, 'that Thomas would become an accomplice in such a transaction.'—'But,' said he, 'Thomas is very much embarrassed. They have entangled him, you know, by favours, and by calls on his gratitude; then they have been long urging him to think of the academy; and upon his observing to them, that his character of private secretary would form an obstacle to his election, Praslin has obtained from the king a patent ennobling his place. Now that the obstacle is removed, they call upon him to present himself, and assure him of a great majority. He is at

Fontainbleau with his minister, where he is beset by D'Argental. I advise you to go and call upon him.'

I set out; and on my arrival, I wrote to Thomas, and asked him to appoint a place of meeting. He replied, that at five o'clock he would be on the banks of the great canal. I waited there for him, and when he came, said, 'You must suspect, my friend, what is the subject on which I wish to converse with you. I come to know if what I am told be true;' and I repeated to him what D'Alembert had said.

'This is all true,' replied Thomas; 'and it is true also, that M. D'Argental has this morning notified to me that M. de Praslin wishes me to offer myself; that he requires it of me as a proof of attachment, urging, that such was the condition on which I received my office; that when I accepted it, I must have understood the reason for which it was granted, and that, if I fail in duty to my benefactor, out of regard to a man who

has offended him, I lose my place and my fortune. Such is my situation. Now tell me what you would do in my place.' —'Are you really serious,' said I, 'in asking my advice?'—'Yes;' said he, smiling, like a man who had formed his resolution.—'Well,' said I, 'in your place, I would do the very thing that you will do.'—'No, say plainly, what would you do?'—'I do not pretend,' said I, 'to set myself up as an example; but am not I your friend, and are not you mine?'—'Yes,' said he; 'I do not conceal it:

*Je l'ai dit a la terre, au ciel, a Gusman meme.'**

—'Well,' resumed I, 'if I had a son, and if he were so unfortunate as to serve a Gusman against his friend, I.....'—'Say no more,' said Thomas, squeezing my hand; 'my answer is made, and well made too.'—'Ah, my friend,' said I, 'do

* I have said it to earth, to heaven, to Gusman himself.

you suppose I could ever doubt it?'—'Yet you came to make yourself sure of it,' said he, with a mild reproach.—'No certainly,' replied I; 'it is not for myself that I wish the assurance, but for men who do not know your soul as well as I do.'—'Tell them,' replied he, 'that if ever I enter the academy, it shall be by the gate of honour. And with regard to fortune, I have enjoyed it so short a time, and have wanted it so long, that I hope I have not lost the power of again doing without it.' I was so affected by these words, that I would have yielded the place to him, if he would have accepted it, or could have done so with decency. But the hatred of his patron against me was so openly declared, that we should have been considered, he as the tool of this hatred, and I as having sunk under it. We adhered, therefore, to the open and frank behaviour which became us both. He did not offer himself as a candidate; and he lost his place of secretary to the minister. Their impudence, however, did

not go so far as to deprive him of that of Swiss-interpreter. He was the next person after me that was received into the academy, and he was received with acclamation, but after a long interval; for, from 1763 to 1766, there was no vacant place, though, in general, the number of deaths was three in two years.

I must say, to the shame of the Count de Praslin, and to the glory of Thomas, that the latter, after refusing to be guilty of an act of mean submission, thought it his duty not to withdraw from a man to whom he had been obliged, till he should receive his dismissal. He continued to attend him another month, going as usual every morning to his levee, while this harsh and vain man never spoke a word, nor even deigned to look at him. In a mind naturally lofty and proud, like that of Thomas, you may suppose how painful this humble attendance must have been! At last, after paying to gratitude more than he owed, seeing how irreconcilable the vile pride of this minister was

with modest and patient civility, he let him know that he saw himself under the necessity of taking his silence for a dismissal, and withdrew. This conduct made his character completely known; and he lost nothing, even in point of fortune, by having acted like an honest man. The king was pleased with it; and he not only obtained afterwards a pension of a hundred louis on the treasury, but handsome apartments in the Louvre, which were given him by the Count d'Angiviller, his friend, and mine.

You have just seen, my children, the number of difficulties which I had to encounter before reaching the academy. But I have not mentioned some thorns with which my path was strewed by poetical vanity.

Madame Geoffrin was very uneasy on account of the opposition which I experienced; she sometimes talked of it with affected raillery, but with evident vexation; and at every new election which removed mine to a distance, I saw that her

anger was raised. 'Well,' said she, 'so it is determined you are not to be a member.' Not wishing that she should be troubled about it, I carelessly answered, that it was the least of my anxieties; that the author of the Henriade, of Zara, of Merope, had been past fifty before he was admitted; that I was not forty; that I might perhaps one day be a member; but that, after all, a number of worthy men, of distinguished merit, comforted themselves under their exclusion, and that I might do the same. I begged her not to be more anxious about it than I was. She was not less anxious; and from time to time, by little words in her own way, she sounded the dispositions of the academicians.

One day she asked me, 'What has M. de Marivaux done, that you should laugh at him, and turn him into ridicule?' —'I, madam?'—'Yes, you yourself laugh in his face, and make others laugh at his expence....'—'Really, madam, I know not what you mean.'—'I mean just to tell

you what he said; Marivaux is an honest man, who cannot have imposed upon me.' —'Then he himself will explain what I do not understand. For never in my life has he, either present or absent, been the object of my raillery.'—'Well,' said she, 'see him, and try if you can undeceive him, for, even in his complaints, he talks of you in a friendly manner.'

As I was crossing the garden of the Palais-royal, in which he lodged, I met and accosted him. He shewed at first some repugnance to explain himself; and repeated that he would still do me justice in the affair of the academy. 'Sir,' said I at last, somewhat hastily, 'let us drop the academy; it is not with a view to it that I take this step: it is not your vote which I solicit, it is your esteem which I demand, and of which I am jealous.'—'You have it wholly,' said he. —'If so, then be so good as say what ground I have given for the complaints which you make upon me.'—'What,' said he, 'have you forgotten that one even-

ing, at the house of Madame Dubocage, when you sat by Madame de Villaumont, you were both constantly looking at me, whispering and laughing. It was undoubtedly at me that you laughed, and I know not why, for I was not more ridiculous that day than usual.'

'Luckily,' said I, 'what you mention is full in my recollection; the fact is, it was the first time that Madame de Villaumont had seen you, and as a circle was forming round you, she asked who you were. I told your name. She happened to know an officer of the same name in the French guards, and maintained that you were not M. de Marivaux. I was diverted with her obstinacy, and she with mine; and while describing the figure of the Marivaux whom she knew, she looked at you; this is the whole secret.'—'Aye,' said he, ironically, 'it was to be sure a most laughable mistake! but you had both a kind of ill-natured and bantering look, which I know perfectly, and which is very differ-

ent from that of mere gaiety.'—'Yet ours, I swear to you, was quite simple and quite innocent. In short,' continued I, 'I have told you the plain truth. I thought this my duty, and I have done it; if you do not believe me, it will be my turn, sir, to complain of you.' He assured me, that he believed what I said; yet he did not the less say to Madame Geoffrin, that he had understood this explanation only as a skilful mode of excusing myself. Death deprived me of his vote; but if he had given it, he would have thought himself doing a generous action.

Madame de Villaumont, of whom I have spoken, was daughter to Madame Gaulard, and the rival of Madame de Brionne in beauty, nay, she was even more lively and animated.

Madame Dubocage,* with whom we sometimes supped, was a literary woman, whose character was respectable, but destitute of variety and animation. She, like Madame Geoffrin, had a literary society,

* See note (16).

but infinitely less agreeable, and suited to her mild, cold, polite, and dull humour. I had belonged to it for some time, but it was too serious for me, and I was banished by ennui. In this woman, who possessed a momentary celebrity, the thing truly admirable was her modesty. She saw engraved at the foot of her portrait, *forma Venus, arte Minerva;* yet no one ever detected in her the least symptom of vanity. Let me return to the complaints made upon me by persons of a different character.

Among the academicians, whose votes were not secured, we numbered the President Henault,* and Moncrif.† Madame Geoffrin spoke to them, and came back to me in a passion. 'Is it possible,' said she, 'that you should spend your life in raising yourself up enemies? here is Moncrif furious against you; while the President Henault is not much less irritated.'—'On what account, madam? what have I done?'—'What have you done?

* See note (17). † See note (18).

just your Art of Poetry; for you will always be writing books.'—'And what is there in this book that they are angry at?'—'I know, as to Moncrif,' says she, 'he makes it no secret, but declares it aloud. You quote one of his songs in a mutilated state. It contained five couplets, and you quote only three.'—'Alas! madam, I quoted the best, and kept back only those which repeated the same idea.'—'The very thing he complains of; you attempted to correct his work. He will never forgive you in life or death.'—'Then, madam, let him live and die my enemy, on account of the two couplets of his song; I will submit to my disgrace. But what is my offence against the honest president?'—'He did not say; but he too, I believe, complains of your book. I will learn it.' She did learn it. But when I urged her to tell it me, a diverting scene took place, of which the Abbé Raynal was a witness.

'Well, madam, you have seen the President Henault? has he told you at last

what injury I have done him?'—'Yes, I know it, but he forgives you; he is willing even to forget it; let no more be said on the subject.'—'At least, madam, I ought to know what this involuntary crime is which he is so kind as to forget.'—'There is no occasion at all for your knowing it. You will have his vote, and that is enough.'—'No, it is not enough; and I am not a man to endure accusations without knowing the subject.'—'Madam,' said Raynal, 'M. Marmontel seems to me in the right.'—'Don't you see,' replied she, 'that he wishes to know it only that he may turn it into ridicule, and make a story of it.'—'No, madam, I promise to keep silence, as soon as I know what it is.'—'What it is! why still your book, and your rage for quotation. Is not the book there?'—'Yes, madam, it is.'—'Let me see that song of the president's, which you have quoted, on the subject of drinking songs.'—'Here it is:

*Venge moi d'une ingrate maitresse, &c.'**

—'Who gave you this song?'—'Geliote —'Well, since you will have it, Geliote did not give you a correct copy. There is an *oh* which you have suppressed.'—'An *oh!* madam.'—'Yes, an *oh.* Is there not a line which says, "*Que d'attraits!*"—'Yes, madam:

Que d'attraits! dieux! qu'elle etoit belle.'†

—'Now there lies the fault. You should have said,

Oh dieux! qu'elle etoit belle.'‡

—'But, madam, the sense is the same.' —'Yes, sir; but when you quote, you should quote faithfully. Every man is jealous of what he has written; and it is natural he should. The president did not ask you to quote his song.'—'I quoted it with praise.'—'Then you should have

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* Avenge me on a mistress that's false, &c.

† What charms! heavens! how lovely she was.

‡ Oh heavens! how lovely she was.

made no alteration. Since he made it *oh dieux*, he must have liked that better. What injury had he done to you, that you should deprive him of his *oh?* After all, he has assured me that this will not hinder him from doing justice to your talents.'

Both the Abbé Raynal and myself had the greatest desire to burst out a-laughing. But we suppressed our mirth; for Madame Geoffrin was already a good deal confused; and when she was in the wrong, it was a very serious matter.

As we went away, I mentioned to the abbé my adventure with Marivaux, and my quarrel with Moncrif. 'Ah!' said he, 'this proves, that when you hear of a man having enemies, you should examine well, before passing sentence, whether or not he has deserved them.'

After this storm was over, my life resumed its easy and tranquil course. In the first place, it was divided between town and country. I was happy in both. Of my societies in town, the only one to

which I was no longer attached, was that of the *menus-plaisirs*. Cury, who had been the soul of it, was debilitated and ruined. He died shortly after.

When his secret became known, which was not till after his death, I have sometimes heard it said in company, that he ought to have declared himself as the author of the parody. I have always maintained that he ought not; and woe to me if he had, for the oppression would then have fallen upon him, and I should have died of grief. The fault was mine, and it would have been supremely unjust that another should have suffered the punishment. After all, the parody, full of gross abuse, which was generally circulated, was very different from that which he had written. While accusing himself of the one, therefore, he must have disavowed the other; and though he should have made this distinction, would he have been listened to? He would have been ruined, and through my fault; by keeping silence, he did what

was most just, and best to be done both for him and myself; and I was indebted to him for the pleasures of the life which I have led since; my fortunate disgrace had restored me to myself and my friends. I do not number among my private societies the assembly which was held in the evening at the house of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse; for, with the exception of some friends of D'Alembert, as the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Abbé Morellet, Saint-Lambert, and myself, this circle was composed of persons who had no connection together. She had collected them out of a variety of different societies, but had suited them so well together, that when they met, they appeared to be in harmony like the strings of an instrument tuned by a skilful hand. Pursuing the comparison, I may say, that she played on this instrument with an art which bordered on genius; she seemed to know the sound that would be yielded by the string she was about to touch; that is to say, our mind and character

were so fully known to her, that a word was sufficient to bring them into action. Nowhere was conversation more lively, more brilliant, or under better regulation. There was something most singular in that degree of tempered and constantly equal warmth, which she was able to maintain, by sometimes moderating and sometimes enlivening it. The continual activity of her mind was communicated to ours, but in a measured degree; her imagination moved, her reason restrained it. And you may observe, that the minds which she moved at pleasure were neither weak nor superficial; the Condillacs and the Turgots were of the number; D'Alembert, beside her, was like a simple and docile child. Her power of throwing out a thought, and giving it to be canvassed by men of this class; the power of discussing it herself, like them, with precision, and sometimes with eloquence; the power of varying the conversation by the introduction of new ideas; and all with the ease of a fairy, who, by the

stroke of a wand, changes at pleasure the scene of her enchantments; these I say were not the powers of an ordinary woman. It was not with the trifles of fashion and vanity that she was able, during a daily conversation of four hours, to render herself interesting to a circle of intelligent men. One of her charms, it is true, was that warmth of character and language, which gave to her opinions the glow, the eloquence, the interest of feeling. Often too, in her society, nay, very often, reason assumed a gay aspect; a mild philosophy indulged in sportive pleasantry; D'Alembert gave the tone; and who ever knew better than he,

——— happily to steer
From gay to grave, from lively to severe.

You must be curious, my children, to learn the history of a person so singularly accomplished as Mademoiselle l'Epinasse. It will not be long.

There was at Paris a Marchioness du Defant, a woman equally full of wit and

ill-nature. In her youth she was rather handsome, and fond of gallantry; but, by the time I am speaking of, she was old, almost blind, eaten up with vapours and ennui. Though retired in a convent, with a narrow fortune, she continued still to see the fashionable society among whom she had formerly lived. She had become acquainted with D'Alembert at the house of her old lover, the President Henault, over whom she still tyrannized, and who, being naturally very timid, had continued the slave of fear, long after throwing off the chains of love. Madame du Defant, delighted with the wit and gaiety of D'Alembert, had invited him to her house, and had taken such complete possession of him, that he was inseparable from her. He lodged at a distance; yet he never spent a day without going to see her.

Meanwhile, Madame du Defant, with the view of filling up the vacant hours of her solitude, was looking out for a well educated young person, who, having no

fortune, would agree to be her companion, and who would live with her in her convent, as a friend; that is to say, as an humble attendant: she met with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, and was delighted with her, as you may well suppose. D'Alembert was no less delighted to find with his old friend so interesting a third person. Misfortune had placed between this young lady and him, a relation, which tended to draw their souls nearer. They were both natural children. I saw their rising friendship, when Madame du Defant used to bring them with her to sup at my friend Madame Harenc's; for our acquaintance went back thus far. Nothing less than such a friend as D'Alembert was necessary to soothe and render tolerable the sad and severe situation of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse; for not only was she subjected to a perpetual attendance upon a blind and vapourish woman; but in order to live with her, it was necessary, like her, to turn night into day, and day into

night; to watch by her bedside, and lull her asleep with reading; an employment which proved fatal to this young girl, who was naturally delicate, and whose lungs were so injured by the fatigue, that they never recovered. She continued with her, however, till an event happened which broke her chain.

Madame du Defant, after sitting up all night in her own house, or in that of Madame de Luxembourg, who was equally fond of watching, spent the whole day in sleep, and did not appear till about six in the evening. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, after retiring to her small room, which looked into the court of the same convent, rose little more than an hour before her; but this precious hour, in which she was free from slavery, was spent in receiving her personal friends, D'Alembert, Chastellux, Turgot, and myself, occasionally. Now these gentlemen composed also the habitual society of Madame du Defant; but they amused themselves with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, and

these were moments of which the former was deprived; accordingly this private rendezvous was kept secret from her; for her jealousy was well foreseen. But she made the discovery, and talked of it as nothing less than treason. She exclaimed loudly against this girl, accusing her of carrying off her friends, and declaring that she would no longer nourish a serpent in her bosom.

Their separation was sudden; but Mademoiselle l'Espinasse was not abandoned. All the friends of Madame du Defant had become hers. It was easy to convince them that the anger of this woman was unjust. The President Henault himself declared in her favour. The duchess of Luxembourg threw the blame on her own friend, and presented Mademoiselle l'Espinasse with a complete set of furniture in the lodging which she took. Lastly, her friends, through the interest of the Duke de Choiseul, procured an annual pension, which placed her above want; and the most distinguished circles

of Paris vied with each other for the happiness of possessing her.

D'Alembert, to whom Madame du Defant imperiously proposed the alternative of breaking with Mademoiselle l'Espinasse or with her, made no hesitation in devoting himself entirely to his young friend. They lived at a distance from each other; and though, in bad weather, it was painful for D'Alembert to return in the evening from *rue Belle-Chasse* to *rue Michael-Comte*, in which his nurse lodged, he never thought of quitting the latter. But he there fell so dangerously ill, as to alarm Bouvart, his physician. His illness was one of those putrid fevers, the best remedy for which is a clear and pure air. Now his lodging, at his glazier's, was a little room, ill lighted, with a very close and small bed. Bouvart declared to us, that the inconveniencies he suffered in this lodging might be fatal to him. Watelet offered him one in his hotel near the *Boulevard du Temple*; he was trans-

ported thither; and Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, whatever might be thought or said, made herself his sick nurse. No person either thought or said any thing but what was good.

D'Alembert was restored to life; and being desirous from that time of consecrating his days to her, who had taken such care of them, he expressed a wish to lodge in the same house. Nothing could be more innocent than their intimacy; accordingly it was respected; and the high character which Mademoiselle l'Espinasse enjoyed, far from being in the least impaired, was only placed on a more elevated and more honourable footing. But however pure this union was, and however tender and unalterable it always continued on the side of D'Alembert, it was not to him so pleasing or so happy as it ought to have been.

The ardent soul and romantic imagination of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, led her to form the design of rising above her narrow circumstances, to grow old in

which appeared to her terrible. It appeared to her possible, that, considering all the powers of seducing and pleasing which she possessed, even without being beautiful, some one, even of her most distinguished friends, might become so fond of her as to wish to marry her. This ambitious hope, though more than once disappointed, was never relinquished; though the object was changed, it always rose higher, and was so ardent, that it might have been taken for the enthusiasm of love. For instance, she was once so distractedly fond of what she called the heroism and the genius of Guibert, that she saw nothing comparable to him, either in the military art or the art of writing. He however escaped her like the rest. She then thought she might aspire to the conquest of the Marquis de Mora, a young Spaniard of high birth; and really, whether it was love or mere enthusiasm, this young man had conceived a passionate attachment to her. We saw him more than once on his knees

before her; and the impression which she had made on this Spaniard assumed so serious an aspect, that the family of the Marquis were in haste to recal him. Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, thwarted in her wishes, no longer behaved in the same manner towards D'Alembert; and he experienced not only coldness, but often ill-humour, mixed with a great deal of bitterness and asperity. He dissembled his sorrows, and lamented over them with me only. Poor man! so devoted was his submission to her, that, in the absence of M. de Mora, he was the person who went in the morning to the post-office, to inquire after her letters, and brought them to her when she awaked. At last the young Spaniard having fallen ill in his own country, and his family having a suitable marriage in view for him as soon as he should recover, Mademoiselle l'Espinasse conceived the design of getting a physician at Paris to pronounce that the climate of Spain would be fatal to him, and that his life could be saved

only by sending him to breathe the air of France. This opinion, dictated by Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, was obtained by D'Alembert from Lorry, his intimate friend, and one of the most celebrated physicians in Paris. The authority of Lorry, supported by the patient, produced in Spain its full effect. The young man was allowed to set out; he died on the road; and the deep affliction which this event caused to Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, completed the destruction of that frail machine, which her soul had undermined, and sunk her into the tomb.

D'Alembert was inconsolable for this loss. Then it was that he came and buried himself, as it were, in the lodging which he had at the Louvre. He often lamented to me the fatal solitude into which he thought himself fallen. In vain did I remind him of what he himself had so often told me, the change in her affection. 'Yes,' replied he, 'she was changed, but I was not; she lived no longer for me, but I lived always

for her. Since she is no more, I no longer know why I live. Ah! would I had still to suffer those moments of bitterness, which she so well knew how to soften, and to banish from my recollection. Do you remember the happy evenings we used to spend together? Of all this, what now remains? Instead of her, when I return home, I find only her shadow. This lodging in the Louvre is itself a tomb, into which I never enter but with dread.'

I give here the substance of the conversations which we had together, as we walked along in the evenings to the Thuilleries; and I ask if this be the language of a man to whom nature had denied a feeling heart?

I was much happier than he, for I lived among the most captivating women, without being attached to any by the chains of slavery. Neither the lively and handsome Filleul, nor the ingenuous and beautiful Seran, nor the dazzling Villaumont, nor any of those in whose society I took the greatest pleasure, interrupted my re-

pose. As I knew well that they had no thoughts of me, I was neither so simple nor so foolish as to think of them. I might have said, like Atys, and with more sincerity,

J'aime les roses nouvelles:
J'aime a les voir s'embellir:
Sans leurs epines cruelles,
*J'aimerois a les cueillir.**

What charmed me in them was the graces of their mind, the activity of their imagination, the easy and natural current of their ideas and language, and a certain delicacy of thought and feeling, which, like that of their physiognomy, seems peculiar to their sex. Their conversations formed a school, equally useful and agreeable; and I availed myself, as much as possible, of their lessons. The man who aims only at writing with precision, energy, and vigour, may confine himself to the so-

* I like the new-blown roses; I like too to see them unfolding: were it not for their cruel thorns, I should like to pluck them.

ciety of men: but he who wishes his style to possess pliancy, amenity, smoothness, and a certain nameless indescribable charm, will do well, I think, to live with women. When I read that Pericles sacrificed every morning to the graces, I understand by that, that Pericles every day breakfasted with Aspasia.

Nevertheless, however interesting, as a source of mental improvement, I found the society of these agreeable women, it did not prevent me from strengthening and exalting my soul, from opening and enriching my ideas, in a society of men, whose mind gave warmth and light to my own. The house of the Baron d'Holbach, and, for some time past, that of Helvetius, formed a rendezvous for this society, which consisted partly of the flower of Madame Geoffrin's guests, and partly of some heads which had appeared to Madame Geoffrin too bold and too hazardous to be admitted to her dinners. She esteemed the Baron d'Holbach, she loved Diderot, but clandestinely, and with-

out committing herself on their account. It is true she had admitted, and, as it were, adopted Helvetius; but that was during his youth, and before he had committed his follies.

I never could understand why D'Alembert kept himself at a distance from the society of which I am speaking. He and Diderot, associates in the labour and glory attached to the enterprize of the *Encyclopedie*, had at first been extremely intimate; but they were so no longer; they spoke of each other with much esteem, but they did not live together, and scarcely ever met. I never dared to ask the reason.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Buffon belonged for some time to this philosophical society. But the one made an open rupture with it; the other, with more moderation and address, withdrew, and kept himself aloof. I think I understand perfectly the system on which they both acted.

Buffon, by means of the royal cabinet, and his Natural History, found himself

in possession of a considerable income. He saw that the encyclopedian school was out of favour at court, and with the king; he dreaded being involved in the general wreck; and that he might either continue his voyage with swelling sails, or at least might steer prudently among the rocks, he was better pleased to have a free and separate vessel to himself. We took no offence at this conduct. But there was yet another cause for his retreat.

Buffon, surrounded at home with flatterers and humble attendants, meeting usually with an obsequious deference to his systematical fancies, was sometimes disagreeably surprized to find himself regarded by us with less docility and reverence. I often saw him go away dissatisfied with the opposition he had met with. His merit was undoubted; but his pride and presumption were at least equal to it. Spoiled by adulation, and ranked by the multitude among our great men, he was fretted to see, that the mathematicians,

the chemists, the astronomers, allowed him but a very inferior rank among them; that naturalists themselves were little disposed to place him at their head; and that, among men of letters, he obtained only the scanty praise of an elegant writer, and a great painter of nature. Some even reproached him with having written pompously on a subject which required only an easy and natural style. I remember when one of his female friends asked me how I would speak of him if I were to write his funeral oration for the French academy? I answered, that I would give him a distinguished rank among our descriptive poets; a species of praise with which she was not at all satisfied.

Buffon, therefore, finding himself uncomfortable with his equals, shut himself up at home with ignorant and servile companions. He never went to either of the academies; but studied a part to advance his fortune with the ministry, and his reputation in foreign courts, from whom he received handsome presents in

exchange for his works. His silent pride, however, did no harm at least to any body. It was otherwise with that of Rousseau.

In consequence of the success which his two works, crowned at Dijon, had met with among the inexperienced, Rousseau, foreseeing that paradoxes, embellished and animated by the eloquence of his style, would readily draw after him a crowd of enthusiasts, conceived the ambition of becoming the head of a sect; and, instead of being a mere member of the philosophical school, he wished to be chief and sole professor in a school of his own; but, by retiring from our society, like Buffon, without quarrel or uproar, he would not have attained his object. In hopes of drawing the attention of the multitude, he had endeavoured to assume the appearance of an ancient philosopher; and having dressed himself, first in an old great coat, and then in an Armenian habit, he appeared in this attire at the opera, in the coffee-houses, in the public

walks; but neither his dirty little periwig, and staff of Diogenes, nor his fur cap, drew the eyes of the passengers. A bold stroke was necessary, to warn the enemies of literary men, and particularly of those who were stigmatized by the name of philosophers, that J. J. Rousseau was divorced from them. This rupture would gain him a crowd of partizans; and he had fully reckoned upon the priests being of the number. It was not enough, therefore, to separate from Diderot and his friends, unless he also abused them; and by throwing a dart of calumny against Diderot, he gave the signal of that war which, at his departure, he wished to commence.

Their society, however, comforted themselves under this loss; and little affected by the ingratitude on which Rousseau seemed to value himself, found within themselves the most agreeable enjoyments which can be afforded by freedom of thought, and the intercourse of minds. We were no longer kept in leading strings, as we had

been by Madame Geoffrin. But this liberty did not degenerate into licentiousness; there were still revered and inviolable subjects, on which a difference of opinion was never indulged. God, virtue, the holy laws of natural morality, were never, in my presence at least, subjected to a doubt: this is what I can attest. A very wide career was still left; and the flight which mens' minds took, made me sometimes think I heard the disciples of Pythagoras or Plato. There it was that Galiani sometimes astonished us by the originality of his ideas, and by the elegant, curious, and unforeseen manner, in which he unfolded them: there it was that the chemist Roux revealed to us, like a man of genius, the mysteries of nature: there it was that the Baron d'Holbach, whose reading was universal, and who had never forgot any thing interesting, poured out abundantly the stores of his memory: there in particular it was that Diderot, with his mild and persuasive eloquence, and his coun-

tenance sparkling with the fire of inspiration, diffused light through every mind, and warmth through every heart. He who knows Diderot only by his writings, does not know him at all. His systematic ideas upon the art of writing spoiled the beauty of his natural genius. But in the course of conversation, he warmed, and allowing the abundance of his thoughts to flow without restraint, forgot his theories, and yielded to the impulse of the moment; then it was that he was transporting. In his writings he never could form a regular whole: that primary operation which arranges and puts every thing in its proper place, was too tedious and too painful for him. He wrote what occurred at the moment, without any previous meditation; so that, as he said himself, he has composed fine pages, but never written a book. Now this want of connection disappeared in the free and varied current of conversation. One of Diderot's finest moments was when an author consulted him upon his work. If

the subject deserved the trouble, you might see him seize, penetrate, and at a glance discover all the excellence and beauty of which it was susceptible. If he perceived that the author did not execute his design well; then, instead of listening to the reading, he supplied from his own mind the defects of the author. Was it a play, he threw in new scenes, new incidents, and strokes of character, and thinking he had heard what his fancy suggested, he gave us a magnificent account of the work that had been read to him; in which, when it appeared, we found scarcely any thing of what he had quoted. Generally speaking, the whole of every branch of human knowledge was so familiar, and so full in his mind, that he seemed always prepared for what was to be said; and his most instantaneous glimpses seemed the result of recent study, or of long meditation. This man, besides being one of the most enlightened of the age, was also one of the most engaging; and when he spoke from the

fulness of his heart, upon any subject connected with moral goodness, I cannot express the charm which he gave to the eloquence of feeling. His whole soul was in his eyes and on his lips. Never was a countenance more expressive of goodness of heart.

I do not mention such of our friends as you have seen under the eye of Madame Geoffrin, and subjected to her discipline. At the houses of the Baron d'Holbach, and of Helvetius, they were at their ease, and on that account the more agreeable; for the mind must be free from restraint before it can display its vigour and grace; in this respect, it resembles the courser of Virgil:

Qualis ubi abruptis fugit præsepia vinclis,
Tandem liber, equus, campoque potitus aperto
Emicat, arrectisque fremit cervicibus alte
Luxurians.

You may conceive how agreeable, excellent dinners twice or thrice a week must have been in such good company. We

all enjoyed it so much, that when the fine weather came, we sometimes exchanged these dinners for philosophical walks to the vicinity of Paris, and along the banks of the Seine; for the repast on these days was a large dinner of fish; and we went by turns to the places most celebrated for the supply of that article. It was commonly to Saint-Cloud: we went down early in a boat, breathing the air of the river; and we returned in the evening across the wood of Boulogne. You may well suppose that the conversation in these walks seldom languished.

Happening once to be a few minutes alone with Diderot, and talking of the letter to D'Alembert on public places, I expressed my indignation at the note which Rousseau had inserted in the preface to that letter; it was like the wound of a dagger with which he had struck Diderot. The text is as follows:

"I had a severe and judicious Aristar-
"chus; I neither have nor desire him
"any more; and my heart stands in

" need of him still more than my writ-
" ings."

The following is the note which he had added to the text:

" If you have drawn your sword against
" your friend, do not despair; for there
" are means of being reconciled to your
" friend. If you have grieved him by
" your words, fear nothing; it is still
" possible to be reconciled to him. But
" for abuse, injurious reproof, the reveal-
" ing of a secret, and the wound made in
" his heart by treachery, there is no par-
" don in his eyes; he will depart to re-
" turn no more." *Ecclesiast.* 22, *chap.* 26, 27.

Every one knew that this defamatory note was addressed to Diderot; and many believed he merited it, since he made no attempt to refute it.

'Never,' said I, 'can my opinion waver between you and Rousseau; I know you, and I think I know him also. But tell me, what can have thrown him into such a fury, and what pretence he can have for

so cruel an outrage?'—'Let us withdraw,' said he, 'into this solitary alley: there I will intrust you with a secret, which I lodge only in the bosom of my friends.'

NOTES

TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

NOTE 1, p. 51.

The famous attempt made by *Damiens*.—As the king was stepping into his carriage, to go from Versailles to Trianon, this ruffian mixed with his guards, and contrived to give him a wound with a dagger, in the side, immediately under the fifth rib. It merely grazed the skin however, and scarcely drew blood. As the day was cold, and every one wore cloaks, Damiens concealed the dagger under his, and had nearly escaped; but was betrayed by omitting to take off his hat along with the rest.

NOTE 2, p. 56.

Bernis. Most of the particulars of the rise of this personage are given by Marmontel. Soon

after the period at which his concludes, Bernis happened to displease Madame de Pompadour, in consequence of which he was dismissed in disgrace. In 1764, however, he was recalled, appointed archbishop of Albi, and sent as ambassador to Rome. There he lived in great splendour, till the period of the French revolution, by which he lost his whole fortune, amounting to upwards of £20,000 a-year, and was reduced to great poverty. A few years before his death however, he received a handsome pension from the king of Spain. He died at Rome, on the 1st November 1794. His chief poems are, an 'Address to Idleness,' the 'Four Seasons,' and one upon 'Religion.'

Bernard was the son of a sculptor at Grenoble, in the province of Dauphiny. He studied at the college of the Jesuits at Lyons, and some attempts were made by these fathers to attach him to their body; but his inclinations led him to a different mode of life. He came to Paris with the view of displaying his poetical talents. His poverty obliged him for some time to serve as clerk to a notary; but some little poems which he wrote drew him into notice. The Marquis de Pezay took him with him into Italy, in 1734, where he was present at several battles, and is said

to have behaved better than poets usually do upon these occasions. He was afterwards appointed to the office of *secretaire generale des dragons*,* which is worth nearly a thousand a year. He then returned to Paris, where his society was much sought after. The neat pretty turn of his poetry, without warmth or energy, made Voltaire give him the appellation of *gentil*, which always adhered to him. In 1771, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, which reduced him to a state of complete mental imbecility. After this, being present at a repetition of his opera of Castor, he is said to have called out, during the whole time of the representation, '*Is the king come? is he pleased? is Madame de Pompadour pleased?*' an exhibition strongly characteristic of the dotage of a poetical courtier. He died 1st November 1775.

NOTE 3, p. 76.

Boissy. A French comic writer of some eminence. He was borne at Vic, in Auvergne on the 26th of November 1694. After wearing for some time the dress of an abbé, he came to Paris, and wrote a tragedy, which

* Secretary-general of dragoons.

was hissed. He then tried his powers in comedy, in which he was more successful. He married; and having to depend entirely for support on his theatrical productions, was reduced to extreme pecuniary embarrassments. This obliged him not only to write too much, but also to employ his labour on the writings of others, whose comedies, written in prose, he versified, and is said to have often succeeded better for them than for himself. He began by personal satire, but soon renounced that odious mode of subsistence. Afraid of the contempt which poverty meets with in the world, he dressed in the most elegant manner, even while his wife and himself were in danger of starving. After obtaining the patent of the *Mercure*, he is said to have indulged in an excess of luxury, like a man who, after long fasting, receives a supply of food. He is also said, however, to have conducted it well, and to have improved its arrangement. Soon after obtaining the patent he died; on which occasion, he is said to have lamented that his life was not either shorter, that he might have escaped the distresses of extreme poverty; or longer, so as to enable him to enjoy the opulence at which he at last arrived. His dramatic works have been published in nine volumes octavo.

NOTE 4, p. 84.

Suard. This ingenious gentleman, who is still alive, is well known in this country, as the translator of Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V, which was executed with such ability as to secure his reception into the French academy. He has recently been appointed one of the secretaries to the National Institute.

NOTE 5, p. 93.

Malfilatre was born at Saint-Jean-de-Caen, on the 8th October 1732. He was rescued from the poverty which is usually the attendant on the muses, by the Marquis de Lauraguais, in consequence of that nobleman's admiration for his poem entitled, *Narcisse dans l'isle de Venus.* He wrote a number of little pieces in different periodical works, which are said to have given a great promise of future excellence: He had begun to turn Telemachus into verse, and had made a prose translation, with notes, of the Metamorphoses of Ovid. Unhappily, however, he died in 1767, at the age of thirty-five.

NOTE 6, p. 93.

Thomas. Antoine Thomas was born in the diocese of Clermont, and held, for some time, the place of professor in the college of Beauvais. But his merit soon called him to Paris, where he made the most distinguished figure, and was equally esteemed for virtue and talents. He is frequently mentioned, and the principal events of his life recorded in the course of these memoirs, which it would be improper now to anticipate. The following account of his daily habits, however, which is given by a French writer, *Herault de Sechelles*, will be found interesting.

'Thomas,' says he, 'was accustomed, when well, to compose in bed till seven or eight in the morning; he then rose, and continued the same employment, walking. He afterwards returned to bed, took off his shoes, sat down with his legs across, like *Malebranche*, and remained thus concentrated within himself, till the hour of dinner. During this time he could not endure a person to be in his room; he even felt some degree of constraint if there was any one in that next to him. On the days that the academy met, he went, after its meetings, to Madame Necker's, with

whom he spent two hours every day, when she was alone. He was extremely attached to her; yet he sometimes reproached himself on account of the time he spent in her company, and said, that if this acquaintance had been to be made anew, he would not make it. On his return he had some work read to him, but it was seldom or never a new work. In the country he frequently composed in the open air. Often was he met in the alleys of Chantilly and of Marly, seated, with his back resting against a hedge, composing in a low voice, with his head bent forward, a pinch of snuff in his hand, which he was constantly putting to his nose without perceiving it to be always the same. When any one came to tell him that dinner or supper was ready, he used to exclaim—'Always dining, always supping, always going to bed; we pass in this way more than half our lives.'

His works have produced singular effects. One young man, after having read the eulogy of *Duguay-Trouin*, became a sailor, and distinguished himself in that profession. Another, after reading the eulogy of Descartes, became a mathematician.

'Would you know,' said he, 'how to read with advantage? When you take

a book, read first the title; then shut the book, and think how you would write upon the subject. Form in your mind a general division, which may embrace every thing that can be said upon it; then take up the book and go to the table of contents. Fill up every chapter in your own mind. You will seek to compare yourself with the author. You will thus accustom your mind to great efforts, to extensive views. We must try our strength by fighting with giants, if we wish to grow, and to acquire new vigour. This exercise unfolds our powers, and gives them an unlooked for energy. He quoted the custom of Crebillon, who, whenever, in reading history, he met with a striking incident, laid down the book and formed in his mind the plan of a tragedy, founded upon the ideas which he had received from reading.'

When Thomas heard any one mentioned whom he regarded with contempt, he said coldly—'I do not know him.' He was sober, patient, mild, kind, compassionate, feeling in the extreme, yet never inflamed with passion: he treated his domestics with kindness, never uttering a word which could make them feel their situation. Many men of letters received considerable aid from him, and he studiously

anticipated their wants. The following lines, written at the foot of his portrait, were considered as equally just and simple.

On ne sut en l'aimant ce qu'on chérit le plus
De son ame ou de son genie :
Par ses nobles talens il irrita l'envie,
Et la soumit par ses vertus.*

NOTE 7, p. 94.

Colardeau was born in 1735, at Janville, in the province of Orleanois. He made himself known first by the translation of Pope's 'Eloisa to Abelard,' which has been thought little inferior to the original. He wrote also an epistle of Armida to Rinaldo, in imitation of Tasso; but this did not meet with equal success. Nor was he more fortunate with his two tragedies of Astarbe and Calista, the latter of which is imitated from Rowe's Fair Penitent; but does not render the beauties of the original. He wrote, however, a number of other poems, which raised his reputation. He died at the age of forty-one, immediately after being appointed a member of the French

* In loving him, we knew not whether we most loved his character or his genius. By his great talents he provoked envy; he subdued her by his virtues.

academy, and before he could pronounce the usual discourse at reception. This circumstance was rendered the more affecting from the extreme joy which he had displayed on receiving the news of his appointment, and which he had expressed in the warmest terms, in a letter to the academy. His character was mild and friendly. After engaging in a translation of Tasso's Jerusalem, he learned that Watelet had done the same; upon which he not only discontinued his own, but when at the point of death, got up from bed to throw it into the fire. He is said to have had no perception of colours, and to have seen nothing in nature but light and shade; a remarkable circumstance in a poet, who possessed such powers of description. He died on the 7th April 1776.

Lemierre. The author of several tragedies, which met only with moderate success. They contained striking passages and scenes; but his versification was harsh, and his subjects deficient in plan and arrangement. 'Hypermnestra,' and 'The Widow of Malabar,' were the two most successful. He wrote also a poem on painting, whose merits and defects are nearly the same with his tragedies. His character was mild and

excellent. In his youth he furnished a memorable example of filial piety; living himself in the most frugal manner, that he might, every month, carry to his mother the scanty profits which his dramas afforded. He was born at Paris, where he died in 1793, at the age of seventy-two.

NOTE 8, p. 102.

Charles Francois *PANARD* was born at Courville, near Chartres, in 1691. He obtained a little office in Paris, where he remained long unknown, till Le Grand, a celebrated actor, happening to see some of his pieces, discovered their merit, and drew him into notice. He wrote several comedies and *opera-comiques*, besides a great variety of little poems. He excelled particularly in that species of song which the French call the *Vaudeville*. Marmontel, in his Art of Poetry, calls him the la Fontaine de Vaudeville. He describes himself in the following lines—

Mon corps dont la structure a cinq pieds de
hauteur,
Porte sous l'estomac une masse rotonde,
Qui de mes pas tardifs excuse la lenteur;
Peu vif dans l'entretien, craintif, distrait, reveur;

Aimant, sans m'asservir ; jamais Brune ni Blonde
Peutétre pour mon bien, n'ont captivé mon cœur
Chansonnier, sans chanter, passable coupleteur,
Jamais dans mes chansons on n'a rien vu d'immonde

D'une indolence sans seconde
Paresseux, s'il en fut, et toujours endormi,
Du revenu qu'il faut je n'eus pas le demi,
Plus content toutefois que ceux oú l'or abonde.*

He died of apoplexy at Paris, June 13, 1765, at the age of seventy-four.

NOTE 9, p. 116.

Chastellux. François Jean, Marquis of Chastellux, was born of a distinguished family, which he rendered still more illus-

* The structure of my body, which rises to the height of five feet, bears under the stomach a large round mass, which excuses the slowness of my tardy steps. I am little animated in conversation, timid, thoughtful; I love, without enslaving myself; never girl, either brown or fair (luckily, perhaps, for me) has subdued my heart. A songster, without singing; a tolerable couplet maker, nothing indecent has stained my songs . . . . . Of an indolence which nothing can equal, a sluggard if ever there was one; I had not half the income that I needed, yet was better satisfied than those who have gold in abundance.

trious by his merit, both as an officer and a man of letters. His principal work is entitled, '*De la Félicité Publique;* On Public Felicity.' His object is to draw a picture of the human race, and to examine in what age, in what country, and under what government, it would have been most desirable for man to exist. It was rather coldly received at first, but afterwards acquired a considerable reputation. It is even placed by Voltaire above the Spirit of Laws. But this is far from being the general opinion; and Voltaire is here suspected of having wished to pay court to the author, who was supposed to have interest at court; while Montesquieu was then dead. Chastellux served several years with distinction in America, and published a narrative of his travels in that country. It is an agreeable work, and full of information; but he is accused of having ridiculed too severely the Anglo-Americans, from whom he had met with the most friendly reception. He belonged to the French academy, and to various other literary societies. He died at Paris on the 24th October 1788.

NOTE 10, p. 117.

Morellet. A distinguished writer on political economy, with whom Marmontel afterwards became intimately connected by marrying a near relation of his. He is still alive, and enjoys perfect health, though at a very advanced age.

NOTE 11, p. 118.

St. *Lambert* was born and educated on a small estate which his father possessed in Lorraine. It happened to be in the neighbourhood of the Marshal de Beauveau, with whom he became intimately acquainted, and contracted a friendship which lasted during life. S^t^. Lambert discovered early a taste and capacity for literature; but wishing to add some professional pursuit, he fixed upon that of the army. He served accordingly for a long time, and with distinction, both in the armies of Stanislaus and of the king of France; but, amid his military employments, never neglected literature and poetry. He spent some time at the court of Luneville; he was then three years at Cirey, with Voltaire and Madame du Chate-

let; and afterwards, coming to Paris, he was so much pleased with the society of that city, as to fix his residence in it. His poem of the 'Seasons,' was universally admired; and a few years previous to his death, he published an elaborate work, entitled, 'Principles of Morals among all Nations.' He died on the 9th February 1803.

NOTE 12, p. 135.

Caylus, the Count de. The personal coldness which subsisted between him and our author seems to have led the latter to undervalue the merit of this personage. He appears to have been a zealous and successful student of antiquities. In early life, he undertook a journey into Asia Minor, with the view of illustrating his favourite pursuits. Finding the roads rendered impassable by the robbers that frequented them, he devised a singular method of securing himself. Having thrown off every thing which could tempt avarice, he entrusted himself to two of the most daring of these robbers, stipulating for a certain sum to be paid on his return. He found them most faithful guides; and, by their assistance, discovered the ruins of Colophon. After his return to France he de-

voted himself entirely to the arts. On being received into the Academy of Sciences, he turned his attention chiefly to the illustration of classical antiquities. He published, in seven volumes quarto, a collection of Egyptian, Etrusan, Grecian, Roman, and Gallic antiquities. He invented the mode of fixing colours in marble, and made the discovery of encaustic painting. Our author accuses him of partiality in his patronage of artists. Certain it is, however, that to those whom he did patronize, he was most liberal. He died in 1765, at the age of ninety-three.

NOTE *13*, p. 216.

Pompignan. Jean Jacques le Franc de Pompignan was born at Montauban, of a noble family. He was destined by his friends for the bar, and held for some time the office of advocate-general, and afterwards that of first president of the 'Cour des Aides,' in his native city. His own inclination, however, rather inclined to poetry; and he produced, at the age of twenty-five, a tragedy called *Didon*, in which he imitates Racine, not altogether without success. Having increased his fortune by marriage, he removed to Paris in order to enjoy it. There, in 1760, he

was admitted a member of the French academy, upon which occasion he took the step which drew upon him the wrath of the philosophers and the ridicule of Voltaire, for which the stiff and pompous formality of his style seems to have afforded considerable scope. This, in a country where ridicule was omnipotent, obliged him to leave Paris: he lived, till 1784, at his *chateau* near Montauban, when he died at the age of seventy-five.

NOTE 14, p. 219.

Facetiæ Parisiennes. These consist of a number of little pieces in prose and verse, where every sentence or stanza begins with the same particle. The following specimen of the *quand*, may give an idea of the tone of satire which is here adopted.

'*When* a man has the honor to be received into a respectable society of men of letters, the harangue pronounced on his reception ought not to be a satire against literary men.

'*When*, by chance, a man is rich, he should not be so basely cruel as, in an academical oration, to reproach men of letters with their poverty, or proudly to say that

they declaim against riches, on account of the secret envy which they bear to the rich.

'*When* a man's works do no honour to his age, it is a strange piece of misconduct to decry that age.

'*When* one is scarcely a man of letters, and not at all a philosopher, it does not become him to say that our nation has only a false literature and a vain philosophy, &c.'

Voltaire wrote a number of other pieces against the same person. He comments on a translation which Pompignan had made of Pope's Universal Prayer, representing it as more deistical than any thing published by those whom he attacked. He accuses him of unbounded vanity, of writing pompous panegyrics upon himself, &c.

NOTE 15, p. 269.

Towards the end of the reign of Louis XV, an epidemic mortality, as it were, seemed to fall upon the royal family. The duke of Burgundy, son to the dauphin, died first. The dauphin himself then fell into a lingering decline, wasted away without any apparent illness, and died. The dauphiness, whether from contagion, or from some other cause, was soon after affected in the very

same manner, and survived her husband only fifteen months. A similar illness soon proved fatal to the wife of Stanislaus, king of Poland. It is remarkable that all those deaths had been preceded by that of Madame de Pompadour, accompanied by similar symptoms. This last circumstance tended strongly to throw discredit on the suspicions which were entertained of poison, since nobody was known, who could be the common enemy of persons whose interests were so opposite.

NOTE 16, p. 298.

Du Boccage, Madame, celebrated as being the first lady who wrote an epic poem. She began with translating Milton's Paradise Lost. She then wrote the 'Columbiad, or the Discovery of America;' a splendid subject, for which, however, her powers appeared to be scarcely adequate. She was highly honoured, however, by the first characters of the age. Voltaire lavished panegyrics upon her: and in a visit which she paid to Rome, the pope, cardinals, and all the most distinguished families of that city, vied with each other in the attentions which they paid to her. Perhaps, however, this homage might be given less to the excellence of her powers, than to

the singular direction in which they displayed themselves. She died at Paris in July 1802, at a very advanced age.

NOTE 17, p. 299.

Henault. Honorary president in the Court of Inquest, and a man of varied literary accomplishments. He published a Chronological Abridgement of the History of France, in two quarto volumes. He wrote also some fugitive poems, and little dramatic works. His manners are said to have been remarkably engaging; and the variety of his talents made him be esteemed both in the learned and fashionable circles. He enjoyed particular favour with the queen. He died in 1770, at the age of eighty-five.

NOTE 18, p. 299.

Moncrif. The author of a number of poems, which were thought ingenious and delicate, particularly his poetical romances. He enjoyed for some time an office under the Count de Clermont, but was obliged to quit it by the machinations of some of his enemies; notwithstanding which, he continued to enjoy the count's esteem. He was then

appointed reader to the queen, and enjoyed a high degree of favour with that princess. He published an essay on the 'Necessity and Means of Pleasing,' which, though agreeably written, met rather a cool reception. He was thought to attempt reducing into an art, what was only the gift of nature. However, it was allowed, that he practised his own lessons. But his character suffered much more from an elaborate treatise which he published, entitled 'The History of Cats.' It was universally laughed at, and, on his afterwards becoming a member of the French academy, his enemies endeavoured to throw ridicule both on him and that learned body, by representing it as his sole title to admission. His character was honourable and friendly. When M. d'Argenson was banished from court in 1757, Moncrif requested permission to accompany his disgraced patron; but was allowed only to pay him an annual visit. He died at Paris in 1770, at the age of eighty-three.

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